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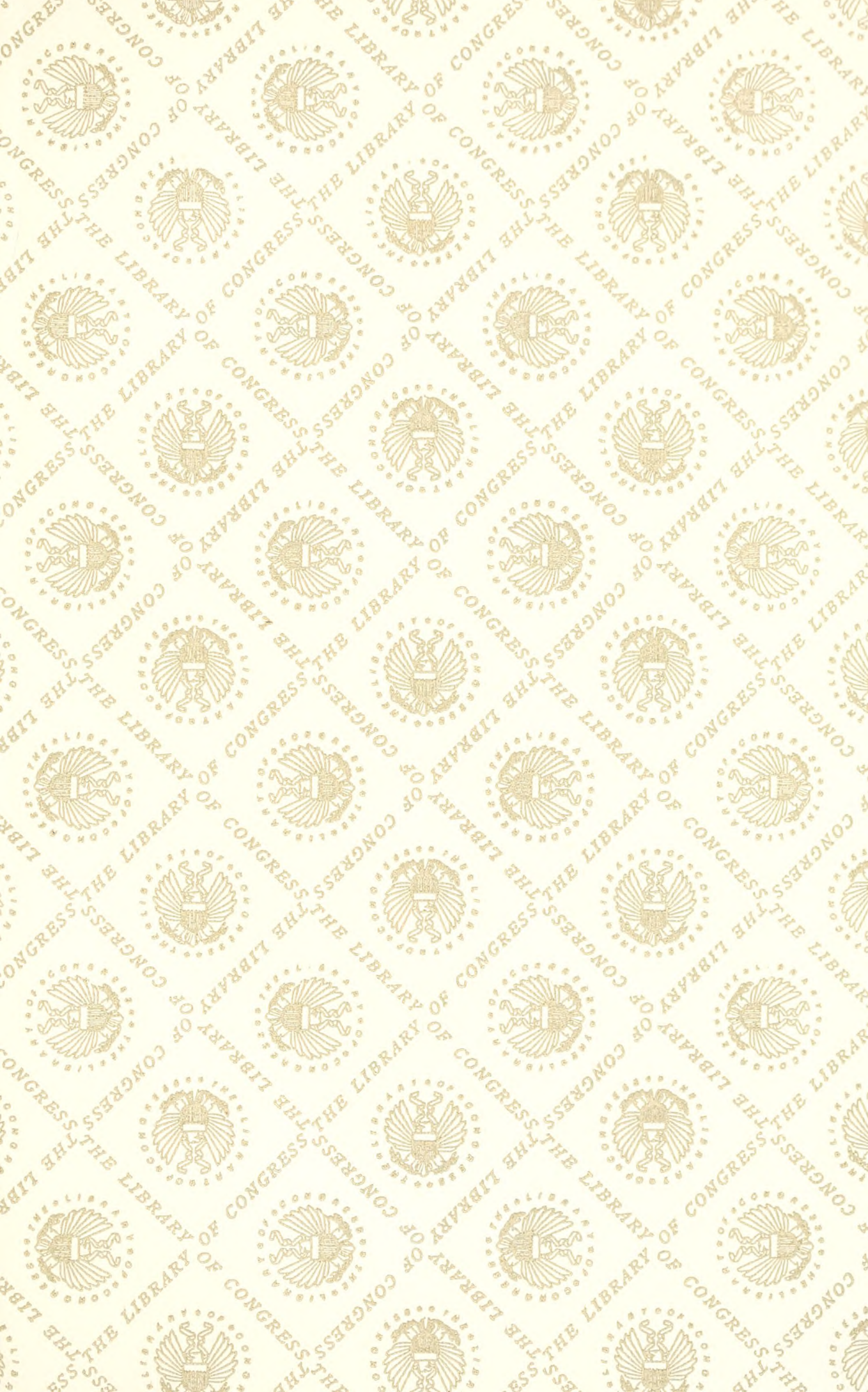


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# FIFTY YEARS IN CAMP AND FIELD

DIARY OF MAJOR-GENERAL  
ETHAN ALLEN HITCHCOCK, U. S. A.

EDITED BY  
W. A. CROFFUT, PH.D.



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## PREFACE

THE work which I have edited and herewith submit to the public is the diary of an eminent American soldier—

Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, a grandson of the Revolutionary hero Ethan Allen of Ticonderoga. General Hitchcock died after having been in the army nearly half a century, and he left behind him a vast accumulation of notebooks and other writings describing in minute detail all of our important wars since 1815. He kept a journal during his entire life, in which he made systematic records almost every day and often many times a day—a voluminous chronicle of passing events which has no parallel in the literary remains of any other distinguished American. Though he wrote with grace and fluency he disparaged the value of his manuscript and said, “I keep this diary for my own use and convenience—to jog my memory.”

A graduate of West Point during its earliest days, he was first an instructor there and afterwards Commandant of the Corps of Cadets of that institution.

He was engaged in the Florida wars and removed the last of the Seminoles; in the Mexican War he was first with General Taylor in the north and later General Scott’s Inspector-General in the south,—at the right hand of that commander from Vera Cruz to the capital.

After the conclusion of peace, while tarrying in New Orleans in 1848, General Hitchcock was vigorously besieged by the participants in the Mexican War, who united in entreating him to write a history of that contest. They knew that he had disapproved of the motives of the administration which began it and yet had been actively present in the battles which effected the conquest of the invaded country—and therefore that he would be likely to be impartial. They knew that he had occupied a confidential position at the head-



quarters of both the American commanders and therefore had unparalleled opportunities. They knew that he kept a minute record of occurrences daily and almost hourly and therefore would be likely to be exact. General Hitchcock took these urgent requests into favorable consideration and, at last, began a history of the Mexican War, as follows:

“Milton, Johannes, said he was ambitious of producing something which the world would not willingly let die.

“The writer of the following sketch or sketches of the campaign of General Scott in Mexico does not emulate the ambition of the author of *Paradise Lost*; he does not aim to produce what the world will not let die willingly; he does not aim, properly speaking, to *produce* anything; but as something has been done by the American armies in Mexico of which he has personal knowledge, he feels called upon to publish what he knows. If what he publishes survives the present age, it will owe its preservation to the extraordinary character of the campaign and not to its own merits as a composition. The author is a soldier and not a writer. He states this simply as a fact, and not to guard against or deprecate criticism. Those who read for information will duly consider the disadvantages under which an unpractised writer must labor.

“But the author confesses that he writes more for a succeeding age than for the present; and he feels safe in thus indicating his purpose; for if the work does not pass beyond the present time it will not live to accuse his memory of presumption. The writer is accustomed to look into past times signalized by important events, and to reflect upon the great value of contemporary accounts of those events, particularly when they proceed from actors; and he thinks an additional value attaches to such accounts when they come from actors who, while in a position to know the truth, were not in a position to write under a bias as seeking their own fame. The writer considers himself in an especial manner as falling within this description of actors in the campaign of General Scott, and in order to make this appear he proposes at once to indicate that position and to show that, while he occupied a place sufficiently elevated and confidential to know much of what transpired in the campaign, he was not in a position to claim any of its honors,



while the circumstances will show that he was sufficiently independent and may claim to be impartial."

Thus far the most vigilant and trustworthy observer of the Mexican campaigns had written when he came to a full stop. He intimates that it will be necessary to speak in the first person instead of the third, but, for reasons known only to himself, he never resumed the important narrative. He kept trunkfuls of his diaries, however, with the greatest care. These contain the most vivid and complete history of that conflict that has yet been written.

In the War for the Union, declining on account of age and ill health the command of the army in the field and insisting that it be given to General Grant, he became the military adviser of Secretary Stanton and Mr. Lincoln, and directed many of the most important movements. During the war he kept a continuous diary, filled with graphic descriptions of detail and estimates of methods and of men, and preserved and bequeathed thousands of letters from distinguished correspondents. His account of the struggle is fragmentary and deficient in details, as it was observed mainly from the White House and War Department, but he had a comprehensive view of the field, saw all that could be seen from headquarters, and possessed the advantage of frequent conferences with the chief actors in the momentous crisis.

Besides his voluminous contributions to military history, General Hitchcock wrote often and vigorously for publication on passing events and matters of professional importance, his style being so trenchant that he was known as "the Pen of the Army." He was also a student and writer on recondite philosophy, and in the intervals of an active career gave to the world eight volumes on abstruse and esoteric subjects.

W. A. C.







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# Fifty Years in Camp and Field

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## CHAPTER I

THE VERMONT WILDERNESS. ARRIVAL OF CHAMPLAIN. THE  
NORTHERN INDIANS. THE BLOODY FRONTIER

ETHAN ALLEN HITCHCOCK was born at Vergennes, Vermont, on May 18, 1798. His father was a distinguished lawyer. His mother was a daughter of the famous Ethan Allen.

These were stirring times. War was imminent with our old ally, France, without whose generous and timely aid twenty years before, our independence would have been indefinitely postponed. Our envoys had been dismissed from Versailles with an insult; this whole country was in the convulsions of a strong resentment; a provisional army was again being equipped to defend our honor and national life, and George Washington, in luxurious retirement at Mount Vernon, had yielded to the affectionate persistence which summoned him once more to lead the armies in the field.

Vermont, though still sore from the continuous buffetings received from New York, and still resentful on account of the long persecutions of that aggressive neighbor, had just joined the Union notwithstanding, being the first to ally herself with the republic into which the thirteen victorious colonies had agglomerated ten years before, and becoming the youngest of the sisterhood of States. Vermont was thus the daughter of two revolutions, one against New York and the other against Great Britain, the last of which was begun before the first was



ended. And the ancestors of Ethan Allen Hitchcock were conspicuous actors in both.

But the convulsions from which her civilization was born are but a trivial reminder of the furious tumult and turbulence which accompanied her physical evolution. Geology reveals that the Laurentian ridge, a bequest of azoic time, sweeping across Canada and dipping into our eastern States, was the first portion of the solid earth that "in the beginning" was projected above the bosom of the molten deep. Before Switzerland was afloat, before the Rocky Mountains and Andes fixed their trend, before the Alps and Apennines were visible to the huge saurians of the early deep, before the Himalayas reared their volcanic peaks above the cypress reaches of Asia, this fundamental series of igneous and metamorphic rocks had lifted into the air a platform for primeval life amid the strangling gases and the rain of metallic fire. It is considered probable that the basin of Lake Champlain was outlined in the Lower Silurian, when the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks came slowly to the surface of the abounding ocean. During the Champlain period New England was an island, the salt sea flowing up the St. Lawrence and down the Hudson. Then there seemed to be an upward movement of the strata; the climate, which the ice age had rendered arctic, grew milder; the elephant and mastodon appeared, fulfilled their destiny, and disappeared; the whale wandered far inland and packed his bones in clay; vegetation was luxuriant; man came at last.

The Iroquois family presented the finest specimen of the savage that this continent has produced. The confederacy of the Five Nations excited the unbounded admiration of Daniel Webster for the courage, prudence, and statesmanship which it exhibited. Composed of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onandagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, it was held together in close fraternity for a century and a half, in victory and defeat, and made its name a terror from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. The people of this confederation looked back with confiding reverence and gratitude to the watchful, sagacious, and omnipotent Hiawatha, who, by the agency of supernatural forces, had from the beginning of time conferred upon them wisdom and framed for them a government.

How many ages Vermont lay fallow, inhabited only by the wandering autochthon, is unknown, but it was more than a century after the discovery of the continent by Columbus, before modern civilization approached its confines or the eye of the inquisitive explorer discerned its attractions. The year 1609 may be said to be the first date in the history of Vermont; and it similarly marks the synchronous settlement of Virginia by John Smith's colony and the exploration of New York's beautiful and important river by Henry Hudson. During that year also Bradford, Brewster, and their neighbors and Puritan confrères, fugitives from England, began in Holland the organization of that unique party of zealots and adventurers who ultimately carried their outlawed heresies to Plymouth Rock.

It was midsummer of this year 1609, on a day since made memorable, July 4th, that Samuel de Champlain gathered a few Frenchmen around him at Montreal, assembled a large and boisterous party of Hurons and Algonquins on the Sorel, and, afloat in sixty canoes, led them southward against the famous Iroquois encamped upon the inland sea. A destructive battle resulted, in which the French explorer gave the natives their first introduction to firearms by shooting three chiefs himself, after which he pressed on with the lilies of France across the pellucid waters of the lake which was henceforth to bear his name, and along its blooming and verdant shores. This enterprising conqueror was undoubtedly the first white man whose foot touched the low-lying and fertile land which is now the western border of Vermont.

More than another century was to pass, however, before any settlement would be made there by anybody except the brown savages who gave their families a miserable and precarious support, and who raised a few beans and squashes and hunted and fished and fought around the "gateway of the Iroquois." In 1724 half a dozen men came from Connecticut and Massachusetts and put up log cabins west of the Connecticut River and east of Lake Champlain and Lake St. Sacrament (now Lake George), within the territory known as the "New Hampshire Grants." The region received this designation because it was understood to be a part of New Hampshire and because the governor of that colony granted



farms and townships over the royal seal to the bold frontiersmen who ventured thither. In the southeastern corner of what is now Vermont a small, rude blockhouse was early erected in the wilderness and the few newcomers clustered with their families for shelter under its protecting shadow.

There was no more dangerous place in America for a white man or an Indian to live than between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River during the first half of the eighteenth century. For almost a hundred years the desolating wars between France and England went on, having for their constant purpose the domination of New England and Canada. The circumstance that these wars were intermittent even increased their ferocity. From 1670 to the final surrender of Canada to England in 1763 war was declared and peace was proclaimed six different times, but the contest for mastery on this bloody frontier had degenerated into a feud of extermination and was not likely to have its severities much mitigated by a fitful exchange of hypocritical compliments between London and Versailles. Sometimes there were six or eight years of technical peace, before the succeeding declaration of war by the distant kings; but the tomahawk never got rusty in the wilderness, and the governor of New Hampshire never ceased to pay a bounty for the scalps of Indians and Frenchmen. Indeed, so natural and legitimate was this singular industry regarded that an amendment to include "the enemys scalps" was added, *nem. con.*, to the bill in the Legislature offering a premium for the heads of wolves and panthers.<sup>1</sup> Woe betide the family that wandered far beyond the frail blockhouses which the pioneers on this remote frontier threw up for their defence, and woe betide the settlement that relaxed its vigil on account of a proclamation of peace. In fact,

<sup>1</sup> One of the colonies, indeed, enacted a Sunday law which provided that no man should "fire off a gun or musket on the Sabbath day—except it be fired at an Indian." Such barbarous practices were not even confined to that early day, for, nearly a century later, during the Revolution, Great Britain resorted to the same method of warfare. In Buckle's *History of Civilization*, vol. i., page 344, may be read: "Among the expenses of the war that the government laid before Parliament, one of the items was for five gross of scalping knives." Scalping seems to have been the invention of white men, who taught the Indians to scalp in order that they might keep tally of their dead and thus be entitled to their bounty.

some of the most sanguinary massacres on both sides occurred during the seasons of diplomatic tranquillity.

The few whites who pressed thither, constantly if slowly enlarging the periphery of scant occupation, treated the Indians as white men on this continent have always treated them, and as conquerors in every land have always treated those whom they drove from their homes:—as having no right whatever to resist the invaders and as being barbarians and “insurgents” if they presumed to set up a claim to anything that the newcomers wanted. It is not to be denied that the Indians had warlike methods of their own; but reading the history of that century in detail and comparing battle with battle, treachery with treachery, and massacre with massacre, it does not appear that the Pequots or the Mohawks were a whit more savage than were the Puritans and their descendants who bought powder and bullets and came across the country from Boston and New Haven.



## CHAPTER II.

CONNECTICUT AND MASSACHUSETTS. VERMONT UP AT AUCTION.  
THE PENNSYLVANIAN BOUNTY. FIERCE CONTEST FOR  
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GRANTS. REMEMBER BAKER AND  
HIS COUSINS

DURING this first half of the eighteenth century adventurous and enterprising families, mostly from Connecticut, numbering a few score in all, crossed the northern line of Massachusetts and built rude cabins in sheltered valleys and within reach of "the blockhouse" west of the Connecticut River. This frontier community, whose most fearless members built their log cabins overlooking the southern waters of Lake Champlain, bore about the same relation to the Connecticut of that time that Wyoming and New Mexico now bear to our Atlantic States, except that it was provided with fewer comforts and, in point of time spent in transportation thither, it was more distant and less accessible. Only near the river and along the border of Massachusetts was there a sufficient cluster of inhabitants for protection against the wolves and bears.

This southernmost section of the wild territory, lying just north of the Massachusetts line and consisting of nearly one hundred square miles, was originally claimed by the Massachusetts Bay Company; but in 1715 it was ceded by that Company to Connecticut as an equivalent for 197,703 acres of land amicably transferred by the latter in straightening the common boundary.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later it was put up at auction by the thrifty

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut at this time also owned a strip fifty miles wide extending westward through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, to the Mississippi River, even embracing within its limits the site of the present city of Chicago. From this vast domain the "Western Reserve" was cut off by Connecticut after the Revolution and conferred on the soldiers of the State

colony which had obtained it and was bought at the cost of about one quarter of a cent an acre by Governor William Dummer, of Massachusetts, and others, who, in turn, conferred its political jurisdiction on New Hampshire, understood to own westward to Lake Champlain under royal title. Attractive accounts of the fertility and salubrity of the region were published in Boston, New Haven, Hartford, and Providence, where the colonists declared that they were becoming uncomfortably overcrowded; and, gradually and slowly, decade by decade, through the first half of the eighteenth century, pioneers from Boston Bay, Long Island Sound, and the Narragansetts, each with wife and children, axe and ox-team, powder-horn and shotgun, strayed into the northern wilderness and set up a straggling skirmish line of cabins. And there each contributed his days' works to the common defence, and the frail structure which they had built as a rallying point they named, after the chief proprietor of the land, Fort Dummer. The inhabitants of this region now constitute the towns of Dummerston, Brattleboro, Vernon, and Putney in Vermont. The first settlers thought they were in Massachusetts but for generations thereafter they were claimed also by both New Hampshire and New York as "the equivalent land."

The land to which they had come was a contested land. As was equally the case in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, the charters of coterminous colonies conflicted here. Every part of New England was a No Man's Land. The royal Stuarts were always exceedingly dull in geography and arithmetic—probably at the very foot of the class of crowned heads. They were effusive in affection and profound in lack of information. They were reckless in their prodigality. The Charleses and Jameses and even William gave away empires five times as large as England over and over again, apparently without a thought whether they had previously conferred them on somebody else or not. They were perfectly willing to be thought inaccurate, but determined not to be called stingy. So, charters and patents

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as a bounty, and on the schools of the State as a fund. This for a generation was called New Connecticut, and members of the Assembly came to the Legislature of Connecticut from Westmoreland, now the northeastern part of Pennsylvania.



were found to overlies each other from the Penobscot to the Potomac. There was everywhere a startling disregard of prior rights. Each succeeding parasite expected the king to hail him "our righte trustie and well beloved," and to give him "of our abundant grace, sertain knowledge and meer motion," a thousand square miles of land, in the bestowal of which the "meer motion" and "abundant grace" were indeed obvious, but the "sertain knowledge" very uncertain; for the earliest and latest favorites were alike bidden to go to the country "inhabited by some barbarous people who have no knowledge of Almighty God" and find and bound their new barony by the Ocracock, Pocomoke, Sowampset, Quonektacut, Curritunk, and Narrow Highgansetts, wherever and whenever those rivers might be found.<sup>1</sup>

When, in 1763, France finally surrendered Canada to England her terrified and abandoned colonists between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River burned their homes and fled through the woods to Montreal and Quebec, and to their still smoking cabins and ruined crops came a heavy immigration of settlers into northern New England—an immigration never again to be turned back.

The colony of New Hampshire by its charter was bounded on the west by "the other royal governments," and its successive governors for generations construed this to mean Lake Champlain. In accordance with this understanding Governor Benning Wentworth of that colony, between the years 1760 and 1768, sold to settlers the titles to large tracts west of the Connecticut River and above the Massachusetts line. One of the tracts thus granted, named for the Governor, became

<sup>1</sup> Like master like man. The king's favorites imitated the king in their exercise of generosity in mischievous duplications. As early as 1696, Governor Fletcher of New York, a creature of William and Mary, bestowed 840 square miles of Vermont on a Dutch priest, Godfrey Dellius, and Dellius, by means common in those days, induced the Indians to confirm the deed. Dellius agreed to pay Fletcher as follows: "He rendering and paying there for yearly and every Year Unto us our Heirs and Successors, on Feast Day of the Annunciation of our blessed Virgin Mary, at our City of New York, the Annual Rente of one Raccoon Skin in lieu and stead of all other Rente, Services, Dues, Duties, and Demands whatever, for the said Tract of Land and islands and Premises." Almost a hundred years later the descendants of Dellius strove to compel a recognition of this gift of 840 square miles of Vermont!

Bennington. During the first four of these years his personal land office had been exceedingly active, for he had thus disposed of 118 townships, each six miles square.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime New York, by her Governor, Colden, proclaimed in 1763 that all such lands were the property of New York and could be guaranteed only by New York under the old grant of Charles II. to the Duke of York.

Governor Wentworth issued a counter proclamation declaring the grant of King Charles to be obsolete and to be superseded by the later New Hampshire charter. New York appealed to King George to decide the controversy, and to the consternation of the settlers, he confirmed the grant of King Charles and gave New York jurisdiction, *de jure* and *de facto*, present and past, as far as the Connecticut River. The Governor of that colony thereupon began to sell again the townships that had been sold by New Hampshire and long since occupied, and Governor Wentworth increased the confusion by backing square down and advising the grantees of New Hampshire whose money he had in his pocket to make terms with New York and concede her right to sell their lands over again. This surrender was made the very year that Ethan Allen and his compatriots arrived from Connecticut and settled in the New Hampshire Grants. Rival purchasers strove to get possession of the land and mutual exasperation and recrimination followed.

A unique emigration to the strange woods of the north had set in after the middle of the century. As we have seen, many of the very earliest settlers in the New Hampshire Grants were from Connecticut,<sup>2</sup> and during the next century

<sup>1</sup> We are told that this land was transferred for "a nominal consideration," but it appears more explicitly that Governor Wentworth received \$100 for each township and that Governor Colden sometimes received as much as \$2000 per township—frequently the same tract of land. This was no small burden for poor frontiersmen. Governor Wentworth became very rich and lived in Portsmouth with a splendid retinue and gorgeous chariots befitting his aristocratic name and lineage.

<sup>2</sup> The large proportion of Connecticut families among the settlers of Vermont may be inferred from the names which they carried from the older colony and bestowed upon Vermont towns, including Addison, Avery, Berlin, Bethel, Bolton, Bristol, Brookfield, Burlington, Canaan, Colchester, Cornwall, Coventry, Derby, East Haven, Fairfield, Fair Haven, Franklin, Goshen, Groton, Guilford, Hartford, Manchester, Middletown, New Haven,



they were followed by their relatives, friends, and neighbors, until at this time almost all of the settlers came, not only from Connecticut, but from Litchfield County—men of high intelligence, sturdy strength, and absolute fearlessness.

A forerunner of the Green Mountain Boys in this region was Remember Baker.<sup>1</sup> He enlisted in the British army for the invasion of Canada in 1757, was in the bloody and unsuccessful attack on Fort Ticonderoga the next year, and was engaged in the series of battles around Fort William Henry. In 1759 he left the army, paused a while at Fort Dummer in "the Grants," and then returned home to Woodbury, Connecticut, where one of the friends of his childhood, Mary Bronson, had married his favorite cousin, Ethan Allen.

Most of the Allen family were of the same religious spirit as that which Ethan embodied in the "Oracles of Reason." His younger brothers and even his cousins repudiated the "orthodoxy" of their time. In the *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford) of April 27, 1773, appeared the following—which, it will be noticed, locates Arlington, of the "New Hampshire Grants," as being in "the province of New York":

#### \$100 REWARD

Escaped out of the custody of me the subscriber at Salisbury, on the night after the 19th of April inst., Remember Baker of Arlington, in Charlotte county, and province of New York, and Zimrie Allen of said Salisbury, being each of them under an arrest for blasphemy, committed at said Salisbury on or about the 28th day of March last. Said Baker is about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches high,

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Orange, Pomfret, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Stamford, Warren, Waterbury, Weathersfield, Weston, Windham, Windsor, Woodstock, and Woodbury.

<sup>1</sup> Remember Baker was born in Woodbury, Connecticut, in 1740. He was a man of remarkable courage, energy, and enterprise. Besides fighting in the French wars and in the contest for the defence of Vermont against the pretensions of New York, and in the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, he accompanied his cousin, Ira Allen, in several expeditions to take possession of the northern half of Vermont, and was finally shot dead by an Indian while scouting on the Richelieu River in 1775 when only thirty-five years old. In the Connecticut Historical Collections, under Roxbury (then Woodbury), we read: "It appears that some of the first settlers were three families by the name of Baker who located themselves about half a mile above the present Episcopal church."

pretty well set, something freckled in his face. Said Allen is near 6 feet high, slim built, goes something stooping, dark hair; each of said fellows being armed with sword and pistol, and are notorious for blasphemous expressions in conversation and ridiculing everything sacred. Whoever will apprehend said fellows and deliver them to the custody of the subscriber, so that they may be brought to justice shall have thirty pounds lawful money reward, for both, and fifteen pounds for either paid by

NATHANIEL BUELL, Constable of Salisbury.

Replying to this arraignment, under date of June 8, 1773, Baker and Allen published in the *Courant* the following announcement of their Unitarian creed:

TO MR. WATSON, SIR: Your publishing the following lines in your paper will oblige yours, &c., whose names are to this piece affixed:

Remember Baker and Zimri Allen, take this opportunity to inform the public that the blasphemy for which Nathaniel Buell constable of Salisbury, arrested them is entirely of a new specie. The indictment was not predicated on the Statute in the case of blasphemy, made and provided, but laid at common law; and though we uttered some words that might be construed satirical against doctrines that some sectaries of christians believe to be sacred, yet we are rationally certain that many of the pulpit thumpers, in their solemn addresses, much more blaspheme the perfections and moral character of the God of Nature than we do. Indeed, according to our conceptions of God, we spake nothing irreverently of him; for we are not believers in the eternity and essential divinity of Christ, as consisting of the essence of God, but are Anti-Trinitarians. And as the said Buell is of a narrow and contracted disposition and capacity, he views such principles as his nurses and ghostly teachers have beat into his head as the standard of religion, and everything that is sacred; and being sparingly stocked with intelligence, and largely stocked with zeal and superstition, together with personal prejudice, over balanced his noddle, and by the instigation of the devil was moved to publish us in the *Connecticut Courant* No. 435, as being notorious for blasphemous expressions in conversation (to speak in his own dialect) "and ridiculing everything sacred."

REMEMBER BAKER and ZIMRY ALLEN.



### CHAPTER III

GOVERNOR TRYON AND THE YORKERS. THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS. THE BRITISH TYRANT AND HIS "HELL-INVENTED POLICY." REINFORCEMENTS FROM CONNECTICUT

IT was undoubtedly Remember Baker's tales of the perils of battle and of exciting frontier adventure that fired the imagination of Ethan Allen of Cornwall, and Doctor Benjamin Warner and his son Seth of Woodbury, and led them to cast in their lot with Captain Baker when he went back to the New Hampshire Grants in 1765. Allen was now twenty-eight years old, Baker twenty-five, and Seth Warner twenty-two. Ethan was shortly followed northward by two of his four brothers and several neighbors; and, when the whole made rendezvous at Bennington, Ethan Allen, notwithstanding his cousin's superior military experience, was acknowledged by tacit consent as their leader; not because he was the elder, but because he never knew subordination and because he possessed the resolute and masterful qualities which fitted him to command. Other daring spirits shortly joined them, and these vigorous and sometimes riotous compatriots, always the terror and frequently the scourge of "Yorkers," were thenceforth known and feared as the "Green Mountain Boys." When they had been some months at their destination and had begun vigorously to participate in the defence of their new homes against the conflicting charters of capricious kings, Sheriff Spencer of New York wrote to the governor of that colony, "One Ethan Allen hath brought hither from Connecticut twelve or fifteen of the most blackguard fellows he can find."

As has been seen, Governor Tryon of New York had laid claim to this territory before these "blackguard fellows" arrived from Connecticut and he and his predecessors had sold much of it under the charter giving to the Duke of York the whole

country between "the Connecticut River and the Delaware Bay," but this claim was not finally ratified by King George III. and its enforcement vigorously attempted by his agents till the very year these troublesome persons became residents of the new township of Bennington.

It would be out of place here to give a detailed history of the partisan warfare which followed during the succeeding ten years. Under the lead of Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain Boys scouted and ridiculed the royal mandate of confiscation. They repudiated and defied the authority of the king and his officers from "the invading colony," as they called it; they refused to pay taxes or render any service to those claimants; they drove out the collectors and sheriffs, and declared that they would defend with their lives the land that they had bought<sup>1</sup>; and when "Yorkers" came up the river to settle

<sup>1</sup> The diary of General Hitchcock makes the following allusion to these men: "They said,—Ethan Allen, my grandfather, at the head of them—'We have purchased these lands under a regular patent from the English government, and if there is anything wrong about it the government must make it right, not we who have paid for the lands and have improved them. They are our homes and the homes of our families, and we will defend them.' The New York claimants sent sheriffs into Vermont to take possession, but Allen and his compeers amused themselves in scaring them out of the country, once or twice using them a little roughly. One was tied to a basket and hauled up to the top of the tavern signpost, a public spectacle, and made to sit there till he promised to leave the country. On another occasion two sheriffs were captured and lodged in opposite apartments, before the windows of which, at a distance, the Green Mountain Boys had hung an effigy. At early dawn one of them was cautiously awakened, as if by a friend, and told to look out of the window upon his companion, seen swinging in the distance. He was glad to take advice and hastily flee the country. The other one was then treated to the same spectacle and the same advice and fled. Away they both went by different roads, to be astonished at meeting at Albany a few days afterwards when each thought the other a ghost."

In his History of Vermont, Ira Allen, brother of General Ethan Allen, says: "Many of the partisans of New York were whipped almost to death. . . . Doctor Samuel Adams was caught and hauled up to the top of a signpost where sat a stuffed catamount, twenty-five feet from the ground, with large teeth, looking and grinning towards New York." One of these Yorkers was whipped till he had fainted away three times and others were still more severely used.

An account in the *Hartford Courant* in 1772 runs thus: "The writs of ejectment coming thicker and faster, women sobbing, children crying and men pierced to the heart with sorrow and indignation at the approaching attorney of New York; meanwhile a spirited valiant man took a small ox-goad and coldly belabored one of the officers. . . . God thus overrules oppression for good."



on farms occupied by the grantees of New Hampshire, the stout yeomanry caught them, menaced them "with a good licking," and, on finding them obstreperous, tied them to trees and "chastised them with the twigs of the wilderness grown on the soil which they coveted," as Allen described it, or, according to his other euphemism, "stamped them with the beech seal, more potent than the seal of the Duke of York." On one occasion after several Yorkers had been violently expelled, Colonel Allen, the commander of the defenders of their homes, went coolly to Albany for the purpose of repudiating the court's authority, and there informed the king's attorney, with a whimsical paraphrase of Judges i. 19, that "the gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills." Throughout the prolonged contest, always menacing and sometimes bloody, the scattered community valiantly defended itself against the aggressors. Never, at any time, were they driven from their homes, nor was the colony of New York, though acting with the royal approval, able to visit them with any serious punishment.

Remember Baker, indeed, was once surprised and captured at his home in Arlington, after a sharp contest in which he was cruelly maimed, and his captors hurried him towards Albany; but eleven of his compatriots rallied and cut off the king's officers and their force, before they reached Troy with their prisoner, whom they rescued and returned with in triumph.<sup>1</sup> By this time, Allen, Baker, Warner, Robert Cochran,

<sup>1</sup> The *Hartford Courant*, April 28, 1772, gives the following account of this affair: "On Lord's Day, 22d. of Instant, March, in the Dead of Night, a collected number of Scotchmen, about twelve or fifteen of Them, made an Assault on the House of Mr. Remember Baker of said Arlington, broke the Door down, entered the House, Baker awakened from sleep, sprang into the Chamber and there defended Himself a little space with a Broad Ax but being overpowered with Numbers, armed with Broad Swords, Cutlasses and Pistols, fled to the Gable End of the House, and with the Broad Ax stove off a Board and leaped out, but unfortunately lit in a Snow Bank which took him in to his Middle, in which Situation he was surrounded, taken and bound. No person in the Mob was hurt in the Fray, nor did they hurt Baker till after they had Bound him, then they inhumanly cut him with their Swords across the Head, and cut one Arm near half off and almost split his Thumb off from the Hand of the other Arm, after this they Barbarously Cut said Baker's Wife across the Head and Neck and Cut a great Gash in the Arm of a Boy of the said Baker about 12 years old. They fastened Baker on a Horse and set out for New York, but the Country round about arose

and three others, had been declared outlaws and their lives a forfeit by authority of the king, and bounties of \$250 to \$750 were offered by Governor Tryon for the capture and delivery of any of them at Albany.<sup>1</sup> They defiantly issued a counter proclamation, in which they offered an insignificant sum of money for the delivery to them of James Duane or John Tabor Kemp, the king's attorneys in New York.

During these years of strife the settlement of the "Grants" became more and more considerable and still, as at first, it was mostly from Connecticut. And it was to Connecticut that the harried settlers turned for sympathy, aid, and reinforcement. On Jan. 23, 1770, a meeting was held in Sharon, Litchfield County, to concert measures for the defence of the New Hampshire Grants, "it being thought grievous, burthensome and unjust that any man should be obliged to defend his title alone." An adjourned meeting was held in Canaan, another town adjoining Salisbury, on March 15th, to "agree on the best method of defending the Hampshire titles." It was resolved that personal re-enforcement was the best defence, and a score of stout-hearted yeomen went from Litchfield County that same spring.

In 1772, Ira Allen and Remember Baker, two of the most aggressive and enterprising of the Vermont pioneers, pushed on up the lake shore, and made a clearing and started a settlement at Winooski Falls, on the Onion River, the site

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and pursued this Banditti party and retook said Baker and Took him to a House and before they had drest his Wounds he had fainted three times."

<sup>1</sup> One of the claimants under the New York grantees was David Wooster. He was caught by the Green Mountain Boys and threatened with "a view," and when he became satisfied that his captors were in earnest he obtained his liberty by agreeing to leave and never return. Three years later he suggested that the man who had threatened him with the "beech seal" be sent to capture Ticonderoga, and two years still later, a brave General in the Continental army, he was killed during the British attack on Danbury, Ct.

Governor Tryon showed the same cruelty in dealing with these frontiersmen that he had shown five years before in suppressing the "Regulators" in North Carolina, and that induced him a few years later to wantonly destroy Norwalk and Danbury in Connecticut—partly moved to the latter act, it was conjectured, by the fact that the Green Mountain Boys were from that colony. In their indignant retort they alluded in their proclamations to "Governor Tryon and his Imps, minions of the British Tyrant, and their hell-invented policy."



where now stands the handsome city of Burlington. Two years later Thomas Chittenden came from Salisbury, and Charles Marsh from Lebanon, Connecticut, and joined them.<sup>1</sup> By this time the Allens had become not only chief defenders but large proprietors. The brothers Ethan, Ira, Zimri, and their faithful cousin, had bought more than four hundred square miles of the land along the lake shore and had built thereon saw-mills and grist-mills and established a line of blockhouses and defensive outposts. Even Heman and Levi had joined in the speculation with their small savings from the sales of "dry goods and groceries." The *Hartford Courant* was the principal "organ" of the New Hampshire Grants, and in June, 1773, it printed an elaborate advertisement of the landed estates of "Ethan Allen & Co." in the north. It began:

Lately purchased by Allens and Baker a large tract of land situate on both sides of the mouth of Onion River and fronting Westerly on Lake Champlain, containing about 45,000 acres and Sundry lesser parcels of land further up the said river.

It continued by praising the new regions: the fertility of soil, the plenty and variety of timber, the salubrity of climate, the contiguity of water power, and the marvellous abundance of game and fish were set forth in florescent style. "Whoever inclines to be a purchaser may apply to Ethan, Zimri and Ira Allen on the premises, or to Heman and Levi Allen in Salisbury."

<sup>1</sup> Chittenden became the first Governor of Vermont and held the office for eighteen years. Marsh was appointed District Attorney by Washington and became a member of Congress from the State. His son was minister to Italy for twenty years. It may be added that about this time many able men came from Connecticut to Vermont: Stephen R. Bradley, from Cheshire, became the first United States Senator, Elijah Paine, from Brooklyn, became the second, and Nathaniel Chipman, from Salisbury, the home of the Allens, became the third.

## CHAPTER IV

TICONDEROGA. BENEDICT ARNOLD AND ETHAN ALLEN. THE  
CONNECTICUT CONTINGENT. FORCED MARCH NORTHWARD.  
MARVELLOUS VICTORY

AT last, one memorable day in April, 1775, the shot fired at Lexington obscured the more trivial contest, and virtually put an end to the struggle of the New Hampshire Grants with New York by giving the defenders of their homes a nobler quarry. A small force of well armed British regulars held the forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point at the south end of Lake Champlain and within a mile of the territory claimed by the New Hampshire Grants.

The New England patriots saw their chance. One of the most ardent and fearless of these was Benedict Arnold, a druggist of New Haven. He was Captain of the Governor's Guards, and when the news of the battle of Lexington reached there he at once set out for Boston with his company, in defiance of the local authority, helping himself to ammunition as he started. On the march to Hartford, at Wethersfield, he fell in with Maj. Samuel H. Parsons, then and for eighteen years a member of the Legislature, and told him that Ticonderoga was defended by but a few men and that "it ought to be captured at once."

As Arnold led his men forward to Boston, Parsons hastened to act upon the hint. He called a secret meeting in Hartford that very night, consisting of local Indian fighters and leaders in the Legislature, and they devised and completed their plans. At this meeting, besides Major Parsons,<sup>1</sup> were Silas

<sup>1</sup> Parsons, of New London, who had been Major in the militia for five years, became a Major-General during the Revolution, succeeding Putnam. In New Jersey he reinforced Washington, who in 1789 appointed him the first judge of the Northwest Territory. Notwithstanding these distinguished services, it is now alleged by the British that he held treasonable correspondence with them during the war.



Deane,<sup>1</sup> Samuel Wyllys,<sup>2</sup> Elisha Phelps, Noah Phelps,<sup>3</sup> William Williams,<sup>4</sup> Jesse Root,<sup>5</sup> Charles Webb,<sup>6</sup> Doctor Joshua Porter,<sup>7</sup> and Edward Mott. How to set the expedition on foot without involving the Assembly, was the first question. How to raise the indispensable funds was the second. They were both settled in an hour. It was resolved to borrow the money from the treasury of the Connecticut Colony on the personal vouchers of "this committee," and it was done. The members named above signed a joint note and obtained \$1800.

Having heard much of the high spirit which Ethan Allen had exhibited in the settlers' contest for their homes, it was at once voted to call him to lead the expedition, and Noah Phelps and Charles Webb were selected as messengers to hasten to Bennington and summon him to that service. Elisha Phelps was made Commissary of the force. A conference was held with the military expert, Col. David Wooster, who approved the steps that had been taken. A committee of four (Edward Mott, chairman) started for Salisbury (the northwestern town of the State) early on the morning of Saturday, April 29th, Doctor Porter, of the Assembly, suggesting that his town was the best place in which to recruit and equip. Ethan Allen's father was born

<sup>1</sup> Deane, of Wethersfield, was a delegate to the Continental Congress and an ambassador to France with Doctor Franklin. He enlisted the services of Lafayette and De Kalb in the Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Wyllys, of Hartford, commanded a regiment at the siege of Boston and served through the Revolution as a Colonel in the Connecticut line. He was then elected Secretary of State, an office which was held by his grandfather, his father, and himself for ninety-eight years in succession.

<sup>3</sup> Phelps, of Simsbury, was a Captain of militia before the Revolution and during the war served as Captain, Major, and Colonel. He was then made Brigadier-General of the Connecticut militia, and a member of the Legislature for many years.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, of Lebanon, was Speaker of the House, and in the Legislature more than fifty years. He was also a Colonel of militia, a member of Congress, and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

<sup>5</sup> Root, of Coventry, was a member of the Continental Congress, in 1778-83, and was Chief Justice of Connecticut under Adams. He was also a preacher and a lieutenant-colonel in one of Washington's regiments.

<sup>6</sup> Webb was for twenty-eight years member of the Assembly from Stamford and was Colonel of the 19th Connecticut regiment in the Revolution.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, of Salisbury, was a member of the Assembly and during the Revolution became a Colonel in the Continental army, leading a regiment at the battle of Saratoga.

there, and many of Ethan's relatives and friends would be sure to join the expedition. Moreover, that was the place to obtain bullets and cannon balls.

An iron mine in Salisbury, known as "Old Ore Hill," had been worked since 1732, and in that year a forge was erected there before Ethan Allen was born. Several thousand tons of ore were mined and worked annually. In 1762, when Ethan Allen was twenty-five, he proposed to his fellow-townsmen more thoroughly to utilize the excellent hematite ore found in such quantities, and they organized a company and built there a blast furnace and iron foundry. Cannons, balls, bomb-shells, and shot were produced at this rustic factory and the excellent guns on board the famous United States frigate *Constellation*, commanded by Commodore Truxton, when she captured a French vessel twice her size in 1799, were turned out of this old furnace in Salisbury. Hither now came the self-appointed "committee" from Hartford, and they picked up recruits as they advanced. One who eagerly joined with a squad of Massachusetts men at Pittsfield was James Easton,<sup>1</sup> who had moved from Litchfield, Conn., ten years before.

As anticipated, ammunition and supplies were obtained in Salisbury for the projected attack on the frontier fortresses. Forty men enlisted at once, and hurried across Massachusetts and found Colonel Allen and his little force at Bennington. Instantly there was renewed activity and a forced march to far off Castleton (May 8th), but before the Connecticut men could move farther, Col. Benedict Arnold made his appearance from Boston. He was without soldiers, but he had a commission and on the strength of that he assumed the right of command. The Litchfield County recruits were not overawed. They had brought their town-meeting with them and they immediately took a vote to determine who should command them. The vote was unanimous for Ethan Allen, whereupon Colonel Arnold patriotically asked permission to march with them as a private soldier. Colonel Allen thereupon appointed him to be his chief-of-staff and the expedition started for its destination.

<sup>1</sup> Easton secured important recruits, marched forward as their captain, and became the bearer of the news of the capture of "old Ti" to the Continental Congress. He afterwards served as Colonel in the Revolution.



While Allen's command was toilsomely making its way towards the hostile fortress a hundred miles northward through the almost pathless woods, Noah Phelps performed a gallant and valuable service. Donning the attire of a frontiersman, he hurried forward, made his way boldly into Fort Ticonderoga, and asked to be shaved by the barber. While undergoing this operation he obtained information from the talkative tonsorial artist, of the strength of the garrison and defences, the picket line, and the distances and directions, and immediately left in a boat without exciting suspicion and met and guided the approaching column.

The story<sup>1</sup> of the arrival under the walls of the fort at early dawn, May 10th, of Allen's short speech to his men, in which he explained to them the hazards and offered any an opportunity to withdraw, the narrow escape of the intrepid leader from the sentry's musket, the surprise of Captain Delaplace in his bed, and the brilliant capture of the fortress, "in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Con-

<sup>1</sup> Ethan Allen, in his interesting *Narrative* of two hundred pages, has given an account of this morning's work as follows: "I landed eighty-three men near the garrison, and sent the boats back for the rear-guard, commanded by Colonel Seth Warner; but the day began to dawn, and I found myself under a necessity to attack the fort, before the rear could cross the lake; and, as it was viewed hazardous, I harangued the officers and soldiers in the manner following: 'Friends and fellow-soldiers, You have, for a number of years past, been a scourge and peril to arbitrary power. Your valor has been famed abroad, and acknowledged, as appears by the advice and orders to me from the General Assembly of Connecticut, to surprise and take the garrison now before us. I now propose to advance before you, and, in person, conduct you through the wicket gate; for we must this morning either quit our pretensions to valor, or possess ourselves of this fortress in a few minutes; and, inasmuch as it is a desperate attempt, which none but the bravest of men dare undertake, I do not urge it on any contrary to his will. You that will undertake voluntarily, poise your firelocks.' The men being at this time drawn up in three ranks, each poised his firelock. I ordered them to face to the right; and, at the head of the centre file, marched them immediately to the wicket gate aforesaid, where I found a sentry posted, who instantly snapped his fusee at me: I ran immediately towards him and he retreated through the covered way into the parade within the garrison, gave a halloo and ran under a bomb-proof. My party, who followed me into the fort, I formed on the parade in such manner as to face the two barracks which faced each other. The garrison being asleep, except the sentries, we gave three huzzas which greatly surprised them. One of the sentries made a pass at one of my officers with a charged bayonet, and slightly wounded him: My first thought was to kill him with my sword;

gress,"<sup>1</sup> has been often told. Immediately subsequent Crown Point was taken by Colonel Seth Warner, and St. John's by Colonel Benedict Arnold.

The prisoners were sent to Connecticut in honor of her extraordinary services, the entire enterprise from first to last having been conducted by Connecticut men and the expenses being borne ultimately by the treasury of that State. In this affair eighty-three men, armed only with muskets, without bayonets, captured, without any loss whatever, three important forts, large magazines of powder, many stands of muskets, a sloop-of-war of sixteen guns, eighty prisoners and three hundred pieces of artillery! Many of these cannon were dragged on sleds through the snow to Boston the next winter and were employed during the siege; and other portions of the vast stores were used to drive back upon Montreal the army that threatened fatally to separate the revolted colonies by cutting off New England.

After this remarkable victory had been won by the gallant co-operation of all, Colonel Arnold again applied for the command, by virtue of his commission from the Boston Council of Safety. Again the soldiers remonstrated. He called

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but, in an instant, I altered the design and fury of the blow to a slight cut on the side of the head; upon which he dropped his gun and asked quarter, which I readily granted him, and demanded of him the place where the commanding officer kept; he shewed me a pair of stairs in the front of a barrack, on the west part of the garrison, which led up to a second story in said barrack, to which I immediately repaired, and ordered the commander, Capt. Delaplace, to come forth instantly or I would sacrifice the whole garrison; at which the Capt. came immediately to the door with his breeches in his hand; when I ordered him to deliver to me the fort instantly; he asked of me by what authority I demanded it: I answered him, 'In the name of the great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress!' The authority of the Congress being very little known at that time, he began to speak again, but I interrupted him, and, with my drawn sword over his head, again demanded an immediate surrender of the garrison; with which he then complied, and ordered his men to be forthwith paraded without arms, as he had surrendered."

<sup>1</sup> This, Allen's elaborate version, was probably an afterthought, as one of the guides who followed him closely always averred that the Colonel's reply was "In the name of the Continental Congress, get out of there, you damned rat!" Even this demand involved a misstatement for purposes of intimidation, as Allen was at the door of Captain Delaplace's bedroom without authority from anybody whatever, even the Legislature of Connecticut; and the Continental Congress, instead of ordering the expedition, knew nothing about it, and did not assemble for organization till the next day.



attention to the obvious fact that nobody else had a commission of any kind. Then, in order to settle finally the question of authority, Mr. Mott wrote out a commission for Ethan Allen as Colonel, signing it "Edw. Mott, Chairman." This seemed to satisfy everybody and we hear no more about precedence. Colonel Allen wrote on May 12th to Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut, a letter of congratulation, beginning: "Hon'ble Sir: I make you a present," and specifying the results of the victory. The prisoners reached Hartford on May 18th.

Connecticut and "the Grants" exchanged much jubilation, but New York heard the great news sullenly. The Green Mountain Boys had reversed conditions and become invaders. Elisha Phelps wrote home, "I saw a young gentleman from Albany that says they disapprove of our taking the fort, because that we did not acquaint them of it before it was done."

The capture of men and material was not the most important feature of this affair. It was the first offensive battle fought by the Americans. It taught the farmers that they could face the British regulars and its astonishing result gave the New Hampshire Grants an assured position among the colonies. New York still remonstrated against any recognition of "felons," but they retorted that the old fight for their homes was only a revolt against this same King George and they plunged into the Revolution with renewed vigor. Though maligned and repudiated by New York, Allen made his way to Philadelphia, where his great services were officially recognized by the Continental Congress.

Before the summer was ended Colonel Allen headed an expedition for the capture of Montreal, but he was taken prisoner on September 25th, to the great joy of the British, and conveyed to England, where he was cruelly treated and kept a prisoner for more than two years. On his return to Vermont he received an enthusiastic greeting. He was commissioned a Colonel in the Continental army "in reward of his fortitude, firmness and zeal in the cause of his country, manifested in the course of a long and cruel captivity as well as on former occasions."

Hearing that the captor of "Old Ti" was again free,

George Washington sent him a friendly salutation. The next three years were spent by Ethan Allen in temporizing with the authorities of Great Britain. He always preferred fighting to finessing, but he now showed himself master of the less agreeable art. The old dispute between New Hampshire and New York broke out again, and was permitted to drag along till the British commanders in New York and Canada sought to take advantage of the resulting irritation to restore the royal authority in Vermont. Ethan and Ira Allen smiled upon the proposition, and even when the notorious Beverly Robinson made to them an attractive offer to sell their country similar to the one which he had just successfully made to Arnold, they feigned an inclination to accept it, but adjourned the conference from time to time while asking for better terms. After informing Washington and Governor Jonathan Trumbull of the game, they prolonged the mock negotiations from month to month till Vermont was saved by the ruse from the threatened invasion of the British army of 10,000 from the north. At the close of the Revolution, Colonel Allen was Brigadier-General of the State militia, and was appointed a special delegate to Congress, where he succeeded in obtaining the recognition of Vermont<sup>1</sup> as an independent State on March 4, 1791.

<sup>1</sup> When, during the Revolution, in 1777, the inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants applied for admission into the colonial confederacy, they declared that they were "free and independent" and would "hereafter be known as the State of New Connecticut." It was concluded afterwards, however, that as Ohio was already called New Connecticut, and as the absurd and unnecessary prefix of "New" had become a burden to enough American States and cities, the significant and euphonious designation, "Vermont," suggested by Dr. Thomas Young, of Philadelphia, should be adopted by the settlers. Young was a scholar and an intimate friend of Ethan Allen, with whom he coincided in his religious views.



## CHAPTER V

JEWISH NAMES IN BAPTISM. HITCHCOCKS AND ALLENS. CON-  
NECTICUT THE MOTHER OF VERMONT. THE ALLEN  
BROTHERS

**A**LMOST all of the babes born in New England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were given Jewish names in solemn baptism. The Puritans scorned and detested the euphonious French nomenclature introduced into England by those sons of Belial who came to the court with James and Charles. They likened England to Egypt, the Indians to the hated Canaanites, and themselves to the blessed children of Israel. The Merrimac River was their Jordan, and Capt. Miles Standish and Maj. John Mason were their Joshua and Joab. The earth was the Lord's, they said, and therefore the rightful inheritance of his worshipers. Even in their savage modes of warfare, which drove the Pequots, Wampanoags, and Mohegans from their homes, they boasted that they used the tactics and methods of the grim warriors who dispossessed the inhabitants of Canaan. So at the baptismal font the favorite and most loved names were Adam and Abel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Ammon, David, Daniel, Jonathan, Joseph, Joshua, Job, Hezekiah, Elijah, and Jonah. When these had been exhausted by a neighborhood there crowded thickly upon the helpless infants such Bible names as Abimelech, Achzib, Aholibamah, Mahalaleel, Hallelujah, Nimshi, Boaz, Doeg, Zerubbabel, and Sheshbazzar. Nor did such comely names as Ruth, Rachel, and Rebecca decorate all the women. Daughters were occasionally baptized Jael, Delilah, Rahab, and Tamar, quite regardless of the reputation of those ladies. Even names of French extraction were sometimes deemed good enough for the girls, and we find wo-

men of those days baptized Lucy, Caroline, Charlotte, Margaret, and Isabella, but during the first part of the eighteenth century there were few men in New England except occasional immigrants who bore such profane names as William, George, Charles, Robert, Albert, Louis, Edward, Richard, or Henry.

Thus it was that the male ancestors of Ethan Allen Hitchcock for several generations bore names almost exclusively selected from the Old Testament, both on his father's side and his mother's. In his mother's line they were Samuel, Nehemiah, Joseph, and Ethan; in his father's line, they were Luke, John, Nathaniel, and Noah.

The subject of this history was in the paternal line descended in the sixth generation from Luke Hitchcock, the first of the family to settle in America, the line of descent being as follows:

Luke Hitchcock, born in Warwick, England, 1606.

John, son of Luke, born in Wethersfield, Conn., 1635.

Nathaniel, son of John, born in Springfield, Mass., 1659.

Noah, son of Nathaniel, born in Brimfield, Mass., 1715-16.

Samuel, son of Noah, born in Brimfield, Mass., 1755.

Ethan Allen, son of Samuel, born in Vergennes, Vermont, 1798.

Of the ancestors of Judge Samuel Hitchcock, the father of the subject of this biography, little is known. Luke came to Connecticut with the English gentlemen who settled New Haven. Whether he came with the first party, *via* Boston, in 1638, is uncertain; but it is recorded that he took the free-man's oath in New Haven, July 1, 1644. He joined the older colony at Wethersfield a few years later, and died there in 1659. In his will he left his widow considerable property for those times and "the education of my children in the fear of God and such other ways as may most advantage them." Luke Hitchcock<sup>1</sup> seems to have been a prosperous pilgrim. He had early received the royal patent to a large tract of land in eastern Connecticut, but the remnant of the Pequots very reasonably insisted that an ancestral right to it was better than any transfer by a king who had never seen it, and they

<sup>1</sup> In his will he spelt his name Hidgecocke, Hidgecoke, Hidgecock, Hitchcock, and Hitchcock. The latter spelling has generally been adopted by his descendants. Those were the days of eccentric spelling. Shakspeare, who lived at the same time as Luke Hitchcock, in the five signatures he has left us, spelled his own name in four different ways.



vigorously fought off everybody whom Luke Hitchcock sent to take possession. The government afterwards reimbursed him for the loss by giving him a deed for the town of Farmington; but that document was esteemed in the family of so little value that it was thoughtlessly used by his wife to lay over a pie in the oven, where it caught fire and burned up.

Luke's son, John, was a thrifty farmer and a deacon of the church. He moved to Springfield, Mass., where he died respected by all.

John's son, Nathaniel, moved a few miles east of Springfield to a tract of fertile land watered by a stream, and there made his home. It was afterwards named Brimfield, and his family was the first that settled in the town. He was a weaver by trade.

Nathaniel's son, Noah, was a shoemaker and farmer, and we know little of him except that he always earned a decent living and was chosen to be selectman of Brimfield for three years in succession. He was well informed for those days and was ambitious that his children should have an education which he himself had been unable to obtain.

Noah's fourth son, Samuel, was born in Brimfield in 1755. His mother was Mary Burt, one of a family that has since produced masterful men in all parts of the country. On account of his father's prosperity<sup>1</sup> and intelligence he had the coveted chance of obtaining a liberal schooling, and he was able even to make classical preparation at the hands of the local minister and finally to enjoy the unusual advantages of a Harvard College training. He graduated there in 1777, and read law with Hon. Jedediah Foster of Worcester. Here he was admitted to the practice of the law and between the ages of twenty-two and thirty he laid the foundation of that thorough knowledge of jurisprudence which afterwards proved such a valuable acquisition not only to himself but to the inchoate colony northward, to which a few years later he emigrated and in whose service he won distinction.

The Allens of this stock were among the first of the Puritans

<sup>1</sup> The Hitchcocks of Brimfield seem to have been marvellously prosperous considering the small opportunities of that rural community. Samuel A. Hitchcock, a cousin of this Judge Samuel, accumulated \$3,000,000 before 1850 and became a distinguished benefactor of his generation.

to fly from the persecution of the detestable Archbishop Laud, and to follow the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower* to the new and strange wilderness which England claimed around Massachusetts Bay. The first comer of this Allen family was Samuel. He was born in the town of Braintree, Essex, England, during the turbulent reign of Queen Elizabeth, about the year 1588. The date of his migration to the pathless wilds of the west is not definitely known, but it was after he had arrived at middle life and probably in the year 1632 or 1633. The genealogy from this peaceful emigrant, Samuel, to Ethan, the frontier warrior, is as follows:

Nehemiah, son of Samuel, born in Windsor, Conn., 1636.

Samuel, son of Nehemiah, born in Northampton, Mass., 1666.

Joseph, son of Samuel, born in Salisbury, Conn., 1708.

Ethan, son of Joseph, born in Litchfield, Conn., 1737.

Samuel, the emigrant, came first to Boston, whence he went to Cambridge, and three years later removed to the Connecticut River with the first settlers of the Hartford colony who established the town of Windsor. He was a man of commanding presence and of much public spirit—a leader in the new and harried settlement. He died in 1648, leaving three sons, of whom Nehemiah, Ethan's ancestor, was the youngest.

Nehemiah in early life moved from Windsor to Northampton, Mass., and afterwards to Salisbury, the most northwesterly town in Connecticut, where he spent the remainder of his days.

Nehemiah's son, Samuel, early left Northampton with his father's family and made his home in Salisbury.

Samuel's son, Joseph, spent the first years of his life in Salisbury. He married Mary Remembrance Baker, of Woodbury, in 1736, and after living three years in Litchfield, they moved to Cornwall about 1740, and there most of their children were born and there Joseph Allen died, April 4, 1755. He was a sober and industrious farmer. His wife's nephew was that fearless pioneer, Remember Baker, whose heroic deeds are part of the early history of Vermont.

Joseph Allen's children were in the order of their birth: Ethan, Heman, Lydia, Heber, Levi, Lucy, Zimri, and Ira. It



is noticeable that all these are Hebrew names, except Lucy, and even that is the feminine of the Bible name Lucas. As General Ethan and his seven brothers and sisters were very obstinate in their opinions and domineering in their methods, they were not always on the most amicable terms; and it was only half in jest that the eldest said to the others that he had known of but two women who were delivered of seven devils: the first, he explained, was Mary Magdalen, and the second, his own mother! Whether they were amicable or otherwise it certainly cannot be said that they were obscure. At least three of them attained wide distinction, while the son of another of them was elected to Congress and became an able and useful diplomatist.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is room here for only a brief sketch of the brothers of Ethan Allen:

Heman set up a store in Salisbury, Conn., in partnership with his brother Levi, and as he proved thrifty and forehanded his house was always regarded more or less as the ancestral home. He became an influential citizen. He was a man of unusual ability and sound judgment, cool, cautious, deliberate, conservative—presenting a sharp contrast to several of his brothers. He never settled permanently in Vermont, but he went thither, was captain of a company of Green Mountain Boys in 1775, was engaged with his brothers in large land speculations, and spent considerable time in "the Grants" during the Revolutionary War. He was one of the delegates from Rutland to the convention which met at Winchester in January, 1777, and declared the independence of the colony, and was a delegate from Colchester to the convention which formed the State constitution. He died of a cold caught during the war.

Heber and Zimri, unlike their brothers, never rendered themselves conspicuous in connection with political affairs. Zimri was like Ethan a "heretic" in religious matters, and lived a quiet and respectable life and died at Sheffield, Mass. Heber went to Poultney, Vt., and died there before reaching middle life. His second son, Heman, graduated from Dartmouth College and became a lawyer. He was successively chosen to be sheriff, judge of the County Court, member of the Legislature, and Brigadier-General in command of the State militia. He was elected to Congress in 1817 and was appointed minister to Chili by President Monroe in 1823, and by Adams in 1825. His wife was a sister of Commodore Hull.

Levi was the most eccentric and perhaps the most violent of the six brothers. He was born in Cornwall, Conn., January 16, 1745, and he himself has recorded that he was a very obstinate and wayward youth. He moved to Salisbury and was Heman's partner in the store till June 5, 1772, when he joined his brothers in land speculations in Vermont, but did not transplant his family there. At the commencement of the Revolution, while his brothers were foremost in the fight for liberty and independence, he espoused the cause of Great Britain, publicly denounced the "rebels," and was advertised in the *Hartford Courant* as a dangerous and malignant

Ethan Allen was twice married. His first wife, Mary Bronson, and five children remained behind in Connecticut when he first went to Bennington, and they afterwards moved to Sheffield, Mass., where the only son, Joseph, died and the rest tarried until 1777. In this year, while Colonel Allen

Tory. Not satisfied with lending his sympathy and words of encouragement to the enemy, he undertook to supply the British ships with provisions, was detected in the act, captured, and held a prisoner in the New London jail. His patriotic brothers, Ethan and Ira, indignant and chagrined, complained to the government and secured the confiscation of his immense landed estate in Vermont. The following is the application to this end:—

“ ARLINGTON, 9th Jan., 1779.

“ To the Honorable the Court of Confiscation—comes Ethan Allen in the name of the freemen of this state, and complaint makes that Levi Allen, late of Salisbury in Connecticut, is of Tory principles and holds in fee sundry tracts and parcels of land in this State. The said Levi has been detected in endeavoring to supply the enemy on Long Island and in attempting to circulate counterfeit continental currency, and is guilty of holding treasonable correspondence with the enemy under cover of doing favors to me when a prisoner in New York and on Long Island, and of talking and using influence in favor of the enemy, associating with persons inimical to this country and with them monopolizing the necessities of life and endeavoring to lessen the credit of the continental currency and in particular hath exerted himself in the most fallacious manner to injure the property and character of some of the most zealous friends of the independence of the United States and of this state likewise, all which inimical conduct is against the peace and dignity of the free men of this state, and I therefore pray the honorable court to take the matter under consideration and make confiscation of the estate of the said Levi before mentioned, according to the laws and customs of this state in such case made and provided.

ETHAN ALLEN.

After lying in jail for six months Levi escaped, ascertained what had been done with his property, and instantly sent to his brother Ethan a challenge to fight a duel with pistols. Ethan seems to have taken no notice of the challenge, except to say that “it would be disgraceful to fight with a Tory,” whereupon Levi wrote a sarcastic letter apologizing for his brother’s timidity. He immediately escaped from Connecticut, joined the British army in South Carolina, and remained in their ranks till the declaration of peace in 1783. He then returned to Connecticut, to collect some debts which were owing him, but was not pleasantly received, whereupon he declared that he had been insulted and would never again live in the United States. He went to Canada, bought a house in Montreal, and lived there four years, during which he organized some commercial ventures with England. While in London looking after his interests, he got into a quarrel with Major Edward Jessup, of the British army, and challenged him to fight a duel. Jessup declined, whereupon Allen posted him as a poltroon. Levi Allen liked England no better than America, and came home after three or four years of wandering, made his way to Burlington, Vt., and announced himself a citizen of the world. He had acquired considerable property, not



was still in captivity, they moved to Sunderland, Vt., where he rejoined them in 1778. Mrs. Allen died there in 1783.<sup>1</sup> The children were taken to Burlington in 1789,<sup>2</sup> where their father had already married his second wife, a widow named Fanny Buchanan. Ethan Allen's children were: First wife's;

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only in Vermont and Canada, but in South Carolina. During the next few years he met with important financial reverses, was arrested for debt, and thrust into the Burlington jail, where he died in the fall of 1801. Under that interpretation of the law which affirms that the removal of the body of the debtor, dead or alive, transferred the debt, the village graveyard was surveyed and "laid out" before his burial, so that he might be interred within the limits of the jail. He was the first person buried there and no stone has ever marked his grave.

Ira was fourteen years younger than his oldest brother Ethan, and was born in Cornwall. He got such knowledge as the plain district schools of Connecticut could confer, and became a forceful writer on politics and history. He also learned surveying and practised the art in Litchfield County. He joined his brothers in Vermont before he was of age and became a Lieutenant in Colonel Seth Warner's regiment during the Revolution. He was a member of the Vermont Legislature in 1776-7, and also of the Constitutional Convention. Although but twenty-six years old, and the youngest member of the convention, he persistently urged the raising of another regiment. To prove to him the impracticability of the plan he was appointed a committee of one to devise means to pay, equip, and keep it in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Allen was an excellent woman. She died at Sunderland and the following lines on her tomb were written by Ethan Allen—evidently the expression of a devout and serious minded deist:

"Farewell, my friends, this fleeting world adieu,  
 My residence no longer is with you,  
 My children I commend to Heaven's care,  
 And humbly raise my hopes above despair;  
 And conscious of a virtuous transient strife,  
 Anticipate the joys of the next life;  
 Yet such celestial and ecstatic bliss  
 Is but in part conferred on us in this.  
 Confiding in the power of Heaven most high,  
 His wisdom, goodness, and infinity,  
 Displayed, securely I resign my breath  
 To the cold unrelenting stroke of death;  
 Trusting that God, Who gave me life before  
 Will still preserve me in a state much more  
 Exalted mentally—beyond decay,  
 In the blest regions of eternal day."

<sup>2</sup> Burlington was at this time not even a village. As late as 1791 there were only three houses there, and two years later there were only seven frame dwellings; but it was "on the road from Montreal to Boston," and in 1793 it was visited by Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria.

—Lorrain, Joseph, Lucy Caroline, Mary Ann, and Pamela; second wife's:—Ethan Voltaire, Hannibal, and Fanny. The services of Ethan Allen were recognized by this country in the education of the two last named sons at West Point during the first four years of its existence. They both served as

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Next morning he brought in a measure to confiscate the property of Tories for that purpose. It was adopted and the regiment was enlisted. It is said that this was the first confiscation enforced during the Revolution. He was the first Secretary of the State, then Treasurer, then Surveyor-General. He was Commissioner to Congress in behalf of Vermont in opposition to the claims of adjoining States, and in 1789 he started the movement which led to the establishment of the University of Vermont and its location at Burlington. He gave to the university \$20,000. During the Revolution he and Ethan originated the singular movement having for its ostensible object the surrender of Vermont to Great Britain, and its real object the misleading of the Canadian authorities for the purpose of preventing their sending an army into New England. The negotiations for the surrender of the territory to Great Britain were of course conducted secretly, but with the full knowledge and consent of the highest American authorities. Ira Allen also originated the project for constructing a ship canal from Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence. In 1795, having become senior Major-General of the militia, he went to France and purchased arms for the State of Vermont, but on his return voyage he was captured and carried to England, charged with furnishing arms to the Irish rebels. He was imprisoned and prosecuted and put to great expense in the court of admiralty, where after eight years a decision was rendered in his favor. He suffered imprisonment in France in 1798 and returned home to the United States in 1801, virtually a bankrupt. He had bought in France 20,000 muskets and 24 cannon and pledged for their payment 45,000 acres of the best land in Vermont. In the litigation and malicious suits that were brought against him his entire estate, valued at more than a million dollars, was lost. The suits brought against him in Vermont after he had returned drove him to Philadelphia, where he died in poverty and distress in 1814, in his 63d year, and was buried in the potter's field in an unmarked grave. Ira was by far the ablest diplomatist and statesman of these remarkable brothers. All his later years the interests of the Vermont University were kept close to his heart, and he is regarded by its friends with much gratitude. He was a facile and interesting writer and the author of *The Natural and Political History of Vermont* and *Statements Appended to the Olive Branch*. Two of his volumes were written as a complete vindication of his conduct in purchasing ordnance in France for which he was so long persecuted. Thompson in his biography of Ira Allen speaks of him as "the diplomatist and manager in civil affairs . . . the greatest and most successful speculator of the brothers . . . who, with his brothers at one time claimed nearly all the lands for fifty miles along Lake Champlain . . . who probably did more toward the settlement and interests of this part of the country than any other man . . . by whose unwearied efforts and profuse generosity the Vermont University was located at Burlington, . . . generally the secretary of that well nigh omnipotent body, the Council of Safety . . . who recommended to the Council the confiscation



officers in the United States army, during the War of 1812. Fanny became a Catholic and retired to a convent in Montreal, where she attracted much unwelcome attention as "the beautiful nun."

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of Tory property to support the military forces of the State . . . the chief negotiator with the British in Canada by which a large army was kept inactive on our northern frontier the last three years of the Revolution."

Among the multitude of anecdotes of Allen, the following is believed to be authentic:

Immediately after the taking of "old Ti," while on his way to lay some schemes before the Continental Congress, he visited Bennington, where the Rev. Mr. Dewey preached before him and other officers a sermon on the capture of the fort. In his prayer the preacher with much fervor poured forth thanks to the Lord for having given the possession of the important fortress into the hands of the patriots. Allen was displeased and as the preacher continued, the bluff hero cried out "Parson Dewey!" The reverend gentleman did not heed the interruption, and Allen exclaimed still louder "Parson Dewey!" As the minister still continued, Allen sprang to his feet and roared: "Parson Dewey! Parson Dewey! Please to mention that Ethan Allen was there!"

## CHAPTER VI

### EMIGRATION TO LAKE CHAMPLAIN. WELCOMED BY THE ALLENS. THE FIRST FAMILIES

**D**URING the Revolutionary decade of excitement and struggle the young lawyer, Samuel Hitchcock, was assiduously cultivating his mind and maturing his character in Worcester. He was fired with an ambition to make the most of himself and early sought to improve his opportunities by going where lawyers were few. The new colony which New Hampshire had long since ceased to claim and New York had failed to subdue, and which had already applied for admission into the union of American States, seemed to him full of promise, and after receiving enthusiastic letters from friends who had gone forward to build their homes on the shore of Lake Champlain he decided to follow them and make his legal knowledge available in a new community. He accordingly brought his professional engagements to a close, counted up the little money he had earned and saved, and in 1786 left Worcester for the mysterious region on the farther slopes of the northern mountains.

Vermont, no longer assailed by the Yorkers or the English, had attained to something of quiet, but the newcomers were still harried and beset by Indians, who were obstinate and would not be convinced that they had no right to the home of their fathers. Moreover, the grave conflict of charters and the incessant quarrels over titles and boundaries, which characterize every new settlement, gave the young lawyer enough to do. He went first to Bennington, and paid his respects to the Allens, already known as the saviours of Vermont and its most influential citizens, and received from them a hearty welcome. Thence he proceeded up the lake to regions that



were almost pathless and uninhabited by white men, and near to Winooski on the Onion River he bought a claim and built a cabin. From the very first he assumed the place among the leaders of opinion to which his education and his knowledge of jurisprudence entitled him, and made them his friends and companions.

Mr. Hitchcock's services were at once in request, and his prosperity became so well assured that in 1789, three years after his arrival at the place where now stands the city of Burlington, he courted, wedded, and established in his frontier home, Lucy Caroline, born in 1768, the second daughter of the famous and wealthy Gen. Ethan Allen, who had removed from Bennington to Burlington.<sup>1</sup> The marriage was the first recorded in that town. The bride was not only of distinguished parentage, but she was a woman of high character, rare delicacy and refinement, and great beauty, widely esteemed and beloved. The birth of their first child, Lorrain, was also the first birth recorded in Burlington.<sup>2</sup>

Samuel Hitchcock spent in Burlington the first six years

<sup>1</sup> The Allens by this time owned a third of all the vast country between Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains, and Ira owned half of Burlington, whose site he had originally selected and occupied. In Spooner's *Vermont Journal*, February 3, 1794, side by side with "the latest news from France" (being the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette, three months and a half before) appears an elaborate displayed advertisement by Ira Allen, beginning thus: "The subscriber has, in the township of Alburgh, Highgate and Swanton, bounding on the Lake Champlain, and in Coventry and Irasburgh, contiguous to Lake Mumphramagog, and in other towns in the County of Chittenden, more than one hundred thousand acres of land which he will lease so long as water runs or timber grows." He offers to lease for several years free of rent and "ultimately" for \$12 annually for each hundred acres. He also has lands for sale in the towns of Charlotte, Shelburne, Burlington, Colchester, Georgia, Williston, New Huntington, Essex, Jericho, and Moortown; "also more than two thousand acres of vale or meadow land by Onion River"; also a large amount of land to lease in behalf of the University of Vermont in various counties. Mr. Allen says "Mechanics of every denomination are wanted," and he anticipates the homestead laws of the United States by offering, free of charge, ten acres of good land to any mechanic who will come and settle on it. He announces that saw-mills and grist-mills are being built in various parts of the new State, and "a college is established at Burlington Bay and a city building there."

<sup>2</sup> The Allens may with peculiar propriety be reckoned among the first families of Burlington. Ethan Allen's daughter was the first married there, his granddaughter the first born there, and his unfortunate brother Levi the first to occupy the village graveyard.

of his life in the new community, after which he lived ten years at Vergennes, a beautiful town on the lake below that city, and there several of his children were born. The remainder of his life was spent at Burlington.

Gen. Ethan Allen died of apoplexy while crossing an arm of Lake Champlain on the ice during the winter of 1789—the same year in which his daughter was married. He was on a load of hay which he had obtained from his cousin, Colonel Ebenezer Allen, and on arriving at his home was found to be dead. The solemn news of the event made a great sensation. His death removed from Vermont her most picturesque and heroic figure. For his services he was thanked by a grateful Congress and put on half pay for life. His strong arm and persistent will had saved the State to its people and the Union, and he stood forth among the most commanding of the Revolutionary patriots.

Ethan Allen belonged to a class who are most popular with those who know them best and are correspondingly misjudged by those who know little of them. He despised the arts by which popularity is courted, and those who count him a demagogue would fail to point out a single word he ever uttered or a single act he ever performed to gain popularity or applause. He was of large stature, very strong and muscular, capable of immense exertion and endurance. He feared nothing under the sun. With proper training he would have won intellectual eminence. Falsehood and tergiversation were so offensive to him that he would not tolerate them even to promote his own interests, and he detested injustice of every description with all his energy. The love of liberty was the controlling passion of his soul. In the presence of sorrow he was as gentle as a woman.

The last five years of Ethan Allen's life were employed by him in the development of earnest projects for the benefit of mankind. His chief effort was for the organization and incorporation of a comprehensive society with branches, having for its main object the consideration and study of moral philosophy.

Washington said of him: "His firmness and fortitude seemed to have placed him out of reach of misfortune. There is something about him that commands our admiration."



Allen wrote to the Congress of the Province of Massachusetts:

"Gentlemen, I have to inform you with pleasure unfelt before that at the break of day the 10th of May, by the order of the General Assembly of Connecticut, I took the fortress of Ticonderoga by storm."

Arnold wrote to the Committee of Safety in Boston: "Colonel Allen is a proper man to head his own wild people, but entirely unacquainted with military service."

His writings, too, had already attained a wide circulation. His meagre schooling, which had not probably occupied more than a month or two of his boyhood, was largely reinforced and compensated for by a phenomenally active brain and a positiveness of conviction which compelled expression. Thus, notwithstanding the deficiency of his education, which he constantly lamented, he uttered his thoughts with the same self-confidence and boldness which were so obvious in his acts.<sup>1</sup>

In all that he wrote the conscientious assurance that he is right, coupled with the broadest tolerance for others, exacts respect from even those who reject his conclusions. In the preface to *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, he says, "In my youth I was much disposed to contemplation"; and he adds that "though deficient in education," so that he "had to acquire the knowledge of grammar and language from studious application," yet he practised "scribbling" for many years. He says he is conscious that he is not a Christian and does not

<sup>1</sup> Sparks in his biography of Ethan Allen repeats the much worn story that at the death-bed of his daughter he repudiated his views concerning religion and the Bible—a story denied by his other children who were present on the occasion. That historian adds, "He was brave, generous, and frank, true to his friends, true to his country, consistent and unyielding in his purposes, seeking at all times to promote the best interests of mankind. He was kind and benevolent, humane and placable." Zadock Thompson, the astronomer and author, in his biography of Allen deeply laments the General's infidelity, and adds "with regard to the general character of Ethan Allen, the conspicuous and commendable traits upon which his fame rests were his unwavering patriotism, his love of freedom, his wisdom, boldness, courage, energy, perseverance, his aptitude to command, his ability to inspire those under him with respect and confidence, his high sense of honor, and probity, and justice, his generosity, and kindness, and sympathy in the afflictions and sufferings of others."

know whether he is a deist or not,<sup>1</sup> as he had never read any of their writings.<sup>2</sup> He proceeds:

An apology appears to me to be impertinent in writers who venture their works to public inspection, for this obvious reason, that if they need it, they should have been stifled in the birth, and not permitted a public existence. I therefore offer my composition to the candid judgment of the impartial world without it, taking it for granted that I have as good a natural right to expose myself to public censure by endeavoring to subserve mankind, as any of the species who have published their productions since the creation, and I ask no favor at the hands of philosophers, divines or critics, but hope and expect they will severely chastise me for my errors and mistakes, lest they may have a share in perverting the truth, which is very far from my intention.

This leader of the Green Mountain Boys, the Roderick Dhu of our highland woods, was dead when Ethan Allen Hitchcock was born in 1798, as were the most conspicuous of his captains: living a life of feverish struggle, outlawry, and sleepless vigilance and defiance, scarcely one of them reached middle life. Therefore it was fated that their famous designation of adolescence was never outgrown. They were "Boys" to the last. Already Ethan Allen's son-in-law, the ambitious young lawyer, Samuel Hitchcock, had begun to make an impression upon the new community, and had not only composed many of its private quarrels and contests

<sup>1</sup> In the diary of the subject of this biography is the following: "My grandfather was not hostile to religion, but he labored under the imputation of being so, because he was offended with the mode of preaching around him and was too honest to conceal his opinions. His volume was merely the attempt of a strong natural mind to oppose what appeared artificial and unessential in religion, and therefore absurd as a foundation of faith and hope. Religion is one thing; the preaching of it is quite another; and when the preaching of religion is absurd, or appears so to men who see no reason why they should not have an opinion in what concerns them so nearly, it is very apt to rouse a spirit of opposition which never fails to be stigmatized as infidelity by the stronger party, when, nevertheless, the reputed infidel may be the true man, as was the case with Socrates and with a greater than Socrates. Why should any one be called irreligious for protesting against a mode of preaching which virtually denies or dethrones God by picturing in His stead His cloven-footed enemy?"

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that Allen's *Oracles* was written and printed ten years before Paine's *Age of Reason*, and before Franklin had published his deistical arguments and Jefferson had come home from France and announced that "Human reason is sufficient for the conduct of human affairs."



but had entered its official service. He was appointed County Attorney in 1787. In 1790, he was elected to the Legislature and re-elected for five years, meantime serving also as Attorney-General of the State. He took an important part in drafting the new State Constitution, was a delegate to the convention which ratified it, and was a presidential elector under it, giving to General Washington the vote of the State for his second term as President.

He was appointed a District Judge by President Washington, and Circuit Judge by President Adams. On the death of the Father of his Country Judge Hitchcock was summoned to deliver the public eulogy before a large and solemn concourse of the people. Meantime he had interested himself deeply in education, and when the rich Ira Allen secured the location of the State University at Burlington and arranged a liberal endowment for it, Judge Hitchcock drafted its valuable charter and was one of its trustees till his death. Doctor Wheeler, in his historical discourse, says "The University owed much of its early prosperity to the reflective and profound mind of Judge Hitchcock." He was largely endowed with benevolence and possessed admirable social qualities. He had polished manners and a suave and agreeable address, and was distinguished in his generation by a good-natured humor and brilliant repartee, both in conversation and at the bar. He had a light complexion and keen blue eyes, and his personal appearance was dignified and commanding. At the time of his death, November 30, 1813, at the age of fifty-eight, he was one of the most highly esteemed men in the State and one of the foremost lawyers of New England. General Grandey, an acquaintance, says in a letter, "Judge Hitchcock was a man of a high stamp of character in all respects—a leading and controlling mind among the strong and original minds of his day."

Judge Hitchcock and his wife had eight children of whom two died in infancy. Those who became adults were: Lorrain Allen, born June 11, 1790, died April 22, 1815; Henry, born Sept. 11, 1792, died Aug. 11, 1839; Mary Ann, born June 3, 1796, died Sept. 16, 1825; Ethan Allen, born May 18, 1798, died Aug. 5, 1870; Pamela Caroline, born May 20, 1805, died Sept. 9, 1822; Samuel, born May 2, 1808, died Aug. 1, 1851.

## CHAPTER VII

CHILDHOOD OF ETHAN ALLEN HITCHCOCK. DEATH OF HIS  
FATHER. ADMISSION TO WEST POINT. MAJOR PETERS'S  
WISE ADVICE. THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT

OF the childhood of Ethan Allen Hitchcock we know little, nor is such knowledge essential to the purpose of this work. He was born in a tumultuous time, and when he was old enough to go to school to his older brother Henry, the daring feats of their grandfather and his brothers were the choicest stock of the gray-haired story-tellers of the vicinity. These vivid reminiscences, rehearsed by one or two of the bold actors still surviving, made a deep impression on the imagination of the lad, and very likely influenced his choice of a profession. In 1813, he was a student at an academy at Randolph, Vermont. During that year his father died and it became necessary for him to decide upon an occupation at once.

It was at first attempted to get for young Ethan a clerkship in some Boston store, but his sister Lorrain wrote from that city in 1814 that the war with Great Britain, then progressing, had caused hard times and a mercantile career was therefore unpromising. It was suggested that he follow her husband, Major Peters, into the military service, and enter the army through West Point. To this she wrote to him warm approval, saying, "I have become quite a soldier myself, and should be rather an advocate for your becoming one of us. Upon my word, I think Brother Ethan would make a very pretty little officer,—one that we should be quite proud of." She added that her husband would interest himself to procure the appointment if possible.

The following letter shows how earnestly Major Peters interested himself:



BOSTON, Sept. — 1814.

TO THE HONORABLE SECRETARY OF WAR,

SIR:—A lad by the name of Ethan A. Hitchcock, residing at Burlington, Vermont, is extremely anxious to enter the Military Academy at West Point, with the object of embracing the profession of arms for life; and his friends are desirous that he should be gratified. Being personally and intimately acquainted with this young gentleman, I take the liberty of naming him to you as really worthy of that distinction. He is about sixteen years of age, has a good English education, and understands the Latin language—is well bred, extremely correct in his moral habits, possesses strict ideas of honor and integrity and a sufficient degree of talents and enterprise to render him useful and respectable in the service of his country. He is a son of the late Honorable Samuel Hitchcock, formerly one of the Judges of the United States Circuit Court, and grandson of the late General Ethan Allen, famous in the revolutionary war, whose name he bears, and whose fame he is disposed to emulate. With a strong desire to perpetuate the respectability of my profession, and firmly believing that this young man will do honor to his country's service, I have the honor to request his appointment as a particular favor granted me.

With high respect

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE P. PETERS.

*Asst. Adjt. General.*<sup>1</sup>

HONORABLE JAMES MONROE,

*Secretary of the War Department.*

Within a month Major Peters was enabled to send to his young brother-in-law the following salutation and judicious council:

BOSTON, Oct. 17, 1814.

DEAR ETHAN,

I am happy to have it in my power to enclose you herewith an appointment as a cadet in the army of the U. S. If you accept it you had better proceed as soon as convenient to West

<sup>1</sup> Major George P. Peters was a cadet in December, 1807, and while commanding his company at the battle of Tippecanoe, Nov. 7, 1811, was distinguished for bravery and was wounded. He was again wounded at Maguago, Aug. 9, 1812, and became subsequently Assistant Adjutant-General, with the rank of Major. He died in Florida in 1819, aged thirty years.

Point in order to get acquainted there before the vacation which will take place on the 15th December and last till the 15th of March. It is usual for many of the Cadets to remain during the vacation and continue their studies. I would advise you to do so this winter. Excuse me for the liberty I take in giving you advice. You are going among strangers and may find some of it beneficial. You will find a great variety of characters at the Academy but generally high minded young men and some of them quarrelsome and extremely tenacious of their honor. The best way to get along with them all without difficulty is to mind only your own business, treat all with politeness and be cautious of forming particular friendships with any till you have learnt their characters and find them correct in their habits. You will probably find some who may be inclined to dissipation who may wish you to associate with them in what they call *high scrapes*: never offend them but by all means avoid them; let them go on in their own way while you can find better associates (for there are some very fine young gentlemen at the Academy) but do not acquire the character of a *tell-tale*; if you once get that character they will all despise you while on the contrary if you mind your own business and apply yourself to your studies you will command respect even from those who take an opposite course. Do not infer from what I have said that I have any doubt of your maintaining a good character, for be assured I have the utmost confidence in your judgment and discretion. But you are young and unacquainted with the world and I think it my duty to inform you of every difficulty which you will have to encounter. I shall enclose you a letter of introduction to Capt. Partridge, Professor of Engineering. Anything else within my power I will do with pleasure.

Sincerely your friend and brother

GEORGE P. PETERS.

CADET E. A. HITCHCOCK.

Major Peters knew the necessity of good advice. He had been four years at West Point and eight years in the army afterwards. He knew what incongruous materials made up the army of 1814. His young brother-in-law did not know it till later, when he entered in his diary the following record—an unconscious testimonial to the moral stamina which lifted Major Peters above the level of his fellows:

“The war with England in 1812 brought into the army a body of newly appointed officers of all grades who had scarcely been selected at all. They were men of all profes-



sions and occupations, including many who were aptly called 'idle dependants upon respectable connections.' They were of all ages, and were appointed without regard to what may be called natural precedence, by which a man, mature in years and experience, has what may be called a right to take rank over a youth, especially when the latter lacks intelligence and education. The consequence was that when these heterogeneous materials came together, nearly all of them alike ignorant of the profession of arms, there were great confusion, disorder and quarrelling, and there was not enough stability or character among the officers of what may be called 'the old army' to act as a wholesome restraint on the new officers, or by example to bring the shapeless mass into anything like symmetry. In some cases an infirm man would be in command of young and lively officers, and in others a mere inexperienced youth would be in command of aged subalterns. From ignorance and maladjustment came numberless duels, till an officer could scarcely consider himself entitled to respectability till he had been engaged in one. With all this, most of the officers were dissipated in the worst sense of that word: profane, indecent, and licentious, and very many of them drunkards. Such men seemed perfectly reckless as to how they lived or what they said or did. A bottle of liquor was always in view on every officer's table or sideboard and was put into requisition at all hours of the day and night by groups of officers who seldom indulged in rational conversation or showed any disposition to gather around themselves the graces and amenities of cultivated life.

"When the war closed, a selection was attempted to be made from among these officers to constitute the authorized Peace Establishment of 1815; but the leaven of evil had spread so far and wide that the character of the Peace Establishment did not materially differ from that of the War Establishment out of which it had proceeded. It is by no means to be overlooked, however, that, notwithstanding the general character of the officers of war time, there came out from among them some of the brightest names that adorn our country's history—to the infinite honor of officers who stoutly resisted the evil influences to which they were constantly exposed."

It is not too much to say that the young cadet profited

by Major Peters's shrewd advice. The testimony of Ethan Allen Hitchcock's classmates is unanimous as to his correct deportment, his great diligence in study, and his unusual acquirements. That the testimony was correct is obvious from the circumstance that while still a cadet he was called upon to teach his class. From his early diary is quoted the following: "During my last year's study at West Point, Captain Crozet,<sup>1</sup> who had been a French officer under Napoleon, came to the Military Academy as a Professor, and introduced there a new science—that of descriptive geometry, with its application to shades and shadows. I requested and obtained permission to add it to my other studies, and to attend the recitations of the class junior to mine. I was particularly delighted with the new method; and, being fortunate to attract the special attention of Captain Crozet, I was enabled by his assistance to pursue this study in advance of the class, and before the end of the year was appointed to act as an Assistant Professor of Engineering, and assisted Captain Crozet in teaching the subject to the class with which I had commenced the study of it."

Captain Partridge, in command at the Military Academy, reported to the Secretary of War, that young Hitchcock had "been of great service" as an assistant instructor.

Cadet Hitchcock was graduated from West Point July 17, 1817, and was named to be a Third Lieutenant of Artillery. The diary, begun at a somewhat later date and faithfully continued for half a century, covers this period:

"My cadet's warrant was dated the 11th of October, 1814,

<sup>1</sup> Claude Crozet was born near Lyons, France, in 1790. He graduated with distinction at the Polytechnic School at Paris and in 1809, joined Napoleon in the field in time to participate in the battle of Wagram. He was in the army for two years, became captain under Ney, and received the cross of the Legion of Honor from the Emperor's hand. On the retreat from Moscow he was captured and for two years was a prisoner of war. On his release he joined Napoleon on his return from Elba, and after Waterloo he fled to America, bringing letters from Lafayette which secured him an appointment as professor of mathematics and engineering at West Point. In 1824, he resigned on account of ill health, and thenceforth for forty years his ability was directed to the development of engineering works in Virginia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. He died in Richmond in 1864. Among the least important but best known of his services were those rendered in building the Aqueduct Bridge that now spans the Potomac at Washington.



if I remember rightly, and I reached West Point in just one month from that date. From the time I entered the Academy I continued my studies until I was graduated, not availing myself of any leave of absence—but this was because I had not the means of travelling even to Vermont. I was not sorry, for I was fond of study, particularly of mathematics. I passed through the whole course prescribed at that day—except French, there being no teacher of it—in less than three years, acting during the last year as an assistant teacher, first of military drawing and then of engineering. I was so anxious to extend my studies that, when a rumor reached us from Washington that my class was about to be commissioned, I petitioned the Superintendent that I might be excepted, and allowed to remain another year at the Academy. This is probably the only instance of that kind that has happened at that Institution, for the young gentlemen are generally very anxious to throw aside their dry text-books in favor of the equipments and duties of an officer. But I was obliged to receive my commission with the rest of the class. There was no merit roll made of the class, and we took rank in the army according to the dates of our warrants,<sup>1</sup> which placed me next to the foot on the list. I have often thought that the roll should have been reversed; for there were some in the class who had been five years in the Academy.”

The young Lieutenant now took a vacation and with his mother and sisters made a visit by sea to his brother Henry, who had become a lawyer and had settled at Mobile, Alabama, the year before.

Henry, the eldest son of Judge Samuel Hitchcock, had come perilously near following the distinguished Allens into the army. While he was studying law in 1814, he offered his services to the State and proposed to raise a regiment for the front. The proposition was favorably considered by the government, but was never realized owing to the sudden close of the war with England.

The convenience of Lieutenant Hitchcock seems to have been considered, for he was assigned to the command of a

<sup>1</sup> Until John M. Washington, Hitchcock's immediate successor, there was no class rank at the Academy, graduates being numbered by date of warrant.

small garrison of twenty men at the old Fort Bowyer, at Mobile Point, in what is now the heart of the city of Mobile. It was here that the British had been repelled and disastrously defeated by General Jackson three years before. At Fort Bowyer the young officer devised a method of flushing and improving the harbor of Mobile by means of jetties—the substitution of long rows of piles for the ineffective dredging then in use. It was the very scheme of deepening the channel by narrowing it which was afterwards introduced successfully by Eads at the mouth of the Mississippi. An elaborate explanation of it was sent to the War Department, but no attention was paid to it. Here the Lieutenant remained during the winter of 1817–18; but he was restless and ambitious, and when Jackson came to Florida in March “to punish the Seminoles,” and Major Peters, on the way to join him with his company of artillery, was detained opposite Mobile Point fifteen days by a head wind, young Hitchcock, now<sup>1</sup> promoted to Second Lieutenant, applied most earnestly to the War Department for permission to join the expedition with his brother-in-law. His application was refused and Peters went on without him, to die the next year at Fort Gadsden.

During the succeeding winter Hitchcock was transferred to New Orleans. He had come to entertain serious thoughts of resigning and studying law with his brother Henry in Mobile. But this intention was interfered with by his sudden promotion to be First Lieutenant and Adjutant of the 8th Infantry.<sup>2</sup>

Early in the spring of 1819, he returned to the north, encountering a terrible storm off Hatteras. “I left Philadelphia,” he says in his diary, “at twelve M/ May 4, and, riding all night in post-coaches, arrived in New York City at eleven next day,” having ridden twenty-three hours. He visited West Point and proceeded on to Burlington, which he had not seen for nearly five years. At his old home everything was changed. Not only his father was dead, but his loving sister, Lorrain, and her husband, and his old friends and companions were widely scattered. His sojourn at the home of his childhood was brief and sad.

<sup>1</sup> February 13, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> October 31, 1818.



Already the young soldier had discovered an inquiring turn of mind, prophetic of the philosopher he ultimately became. In his diary he says:

"I was nearly two years in anxiety because I found myself compelled to doubt. . . . I suffered a great deal of mental pain because of that state of things. I had been taught to think it a sin to doubt anything in the Scripture, and yet I was compelled to disbelieve such stories as Jonah and the whale, the speaking of Balaam's ass, &c."

Later he discovered to his satisfaction that there was a mixture of history, fable, allegory, and error in the Scriptures. But now he was inquisitive, uneasy and restless, and desirous "to know what a certain class of men called philosophers thought of God and man and life." So he read Paley; then Reid; then Hume. About this time he began to read quite promiscuously—Gray's poems, "Doctor Johnson's solemn sayings," Moore's melodies, some French books, a new history of England, Young's *Night Thoughts*, and more of Reid, and meditated and speculated much thereon.

During the winter of 1819, he went South again, as stipulated *via* West Point, New York, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, Augusta, and Mobile, starting November 20th and reaching New Orleans February 2d. He rode alone on horseback from Augusta to Mobile through the Creek country, swimming unbridged rivers, and sailed thence to his destination in a schooner. His brother Henry was now Secretary of State of Alabama, and he saw him at Cahaba on his way. From New Orleans Lieutenant Hitchcock joined the commander of his regiment, Colonel Clinch, and rode up and down through the Choctaw nation, assisting in opening a government road between Nashville and New Orleans, "sleeping in strange places and fashions and often seeing and hearing wolves," and in July joined his regiment, the 8th Infantry, under command of its Lieutenant-Colonel, Zachary Taylor, at Bay St. Louis, sixty or seventy miles east of New Orleans. Under Taylor he assumed his duties as Adjutant, and began a friendship which continued for many years. He rode on military service through adjoining states, but on the whole his life at Bay St. Louis was uneventful.

Here he "read with care Hume's *History of England*."

Diary: "It was about the only book that Col. Taylor had read and he was fond of revising his reading and then coming to my hut to talk it over. He was then very friendly with me. Indeed, he would have done anything in his power to oblige me, and this disposition continued faithfully until he found me in the staff of Gen. Scott as Acting Inspector-General in the campaign to the city of Mexico."

In the fall of 1821, the army was reduced, and the 8th Regiment of infantry was merged into other regiments, so that Hitchcock lost his position as Adjutant and from being first on the list of First Lieutenants in that regiment, became the third on the list in the 1st Infantry, to which he was transferred. In November the regiment went to Baton Rouge. Of this period he wrote:

"My recollections of Baton Rouge are not pleasant. Colonel Chambers was in command, with a fop of an adjutant, both ignorant and conceited. Some thirty idle officers were present for a number of months, a majority of them dissipated men without education. They had no refinement of any sort and no taste for study. The general talk was of duels—of what this one said and that one threatened. Many a time have I taken a small volume in my pocket, started into the woods and remained a whole day, for no other purpose than to be out of hearing of profanity, ribaldry, and blustering braggadocio."

He had ways of his own. He wrote to his mother:

"I have just read a troublesome visitor out of my tent, so now I have time to write to you. It was not a very civil mode of entertainment to make use of a book, but I knew that if I suffered my visitor to gratify himself by talking, I should be troubled with him all of the evening. To prevent this, I took up a volume of Shakspeare and pretended to interest him. He soon became uneasy and withdrew."

During 1822 and 1823, he spent much of his time on recruiting service. He travelled about the country and then to New York and finally to Boston, where he tarried, still recruiting for the army. He read a good deal during these years and indulged much in introspection.



## CHAPTER VIII

INSTRUCTOR AT THE ACADEMY. WEST POINT IN EARLY DAYS.  
MAJOR THAYER AND CONGENIAL COMPANIONSHIP. PROMOTED TO CAPTAINCY

LIEUTENANT HITCHCOCK was a man of practical affairs when called to positions of responsibility, but he was essentially a student. He was ambitious to master all branches of knowledge, and all his life he strove to make himself somewhat acquainted with the contents of every book within his reach. He studied the army regulations and military tactics with untiring avidity, and he became so thoroughly a master of movements and evolutions that during parades and reviews his assistance was frequently sought by his superiors in rank. Even when he was engaged in the mechanical business of recruiting, his efficiency as a drill-master was widely recognized and commented on in the army. This was the cause of his being invited to become a teacher at West Point. Years later he writes of this time as follows:

“The Military Academy at West Point was then under the superintendence of Major Thayer, one of the most accomplished officers and one of the most finished gentlemen of the army. I have always looked upon a visit there at this time as one of the most fortunate events of my life. The Military Commandant of Cadets and Instructor of Tactics at the time of my visit was Major, afterwards General Worth, whose military bearing in the presence of troops filled the very ideal of a gallant soldier in the field. To young and impulsive natures designed for the military profession, Major Worth was by far the most captivating man, while graver men could easily see in Major Thayer deeper and more valuable qualities which made him an object of enthusiastic admiration.

“During many years the Military Academy owed to Major Thayer nearly all of its reputation. He was very systematic, and perfectly uniform and impartial in the enforcement of discipline. With all his great qualifications there was a slight tincture of humility amounting to bashfulness which was concealed from general observation by a certain assumed air of dignity which he was always accustomed to wear on official occasions, alike in the presence of professors and cadets, and which was relaxed—and that very slightly—only with those of his officers who he knew would not approach him with any selfish or sinister purpose. His character, on the whole, was entitled to sincere admiration, but I might not have become acquainted with it had I not won the attention—though without seeking it—of Major Worth upon the occasion of my visit.

“I had not thought of applying for duty at the Military Academy, but it was presently intimated to me at Boston that Major Worth desired to call me to his department, as a subordinate officer.<sup>1</sup> To this I assented and was soon afterwards ordered to report at the Military Academy for duty. I did so, reaching West Point in midwinter, Jan. 31, 1824.”

When Lieutenant Hitchcock thus returned to West Point his younger brother, Samuel, was a cadet there. Duty at the Military Academy is a somewhat solitary and monotonous service, and the Lieutenant was forced into much reading of books and such thought and meditation as they suggested. He indulged in speculations about life and the will; concluded that he was something of a necessarian; read Bacon’s works, Hume’s essays, and Scott’s novels. In many of the recreations and diversions of the young men about him he found little pleasure. Of this winter he says in a later diary:

“I had no fancy for formal dinners or evening parties, especially dinner parties, where a chief object seemed to be to bring out a dozen different kinds of wine, bottle by bottle, of each of which there must be a long account given, setting forth its history, the date of vintage, date of importation, date of bottling &c., &c. I used to get weary beyond description at such parties, and longed for the open air; and when free my

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Instructor of Tactics.



desire to be learning something would come back upon me. I fell to reading and study and in a few months had ransacked a considerable number of books, including most of the standard English poetry, sending to England for a copy of Chaucer."

This spring he reads Montesquieu, Kames, Montholon's *Memoirs of Napoleon*, Burke, Hegel, Percival, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Brown, and Tacitus.

"April 23, '24. Was so much affected by music at a concert in the evening that I was obliged to leave the hall. Music has often overcome me."

"July 27. Arrival at West Point of General Macomb. Knows both the importance and the nonsense of the show part of military life. Always gets up handsome reviews and turns them into fun with his intimates."

"August 17. At reception of General Lafayette. In taking the General by the hand it occurs to me that he will take the hand of many a scoundrel before he gets out of the country."

The Lieutenant visited Boston again during this summer and saw some distinguished people: "Went to Quincy, to pay my respects to ex-President John Adams—a silver-haired old man with a large round head, well balanced, apparently. He was a man of strong passions. John Q. was present. Heard Channing," whom he admired greatly. Of this time he wrote years afterwards:

"I can never forget the joy with which I mingled with the young assistant professors of the Academy, all of whom were graduates of high standing in their classes. The amount of culture among them was considerable; their conversation was enlightened—turning upon subjects of science and literature—in the greatest possible contrast to that with which I had been associated more or less during the five years in which—as I might say—I had been out in the world. It was something like a transition from earth to Heaven, and the contrast made a deep impression upon me. Prior to this experience I had felt an indefinable want in the service—a secret dissatisfaction with what I was compelled to see and come in contact with, without knowing where to look for a remedy. I found it at West Point, where the young officers were amiable and studious and of lovely manners and conversation. There was

no rough, rude boisterousness among them; no profanity, and not the slightest tendency to any sort of dissipation. This was what I had wanted, and I at once entered upon congenial studies, and passed several years in so uniform a life that as I look backward I am scarcely able to distinguish one year from another."

In January, 1825, Lieutenant Hitchcock received his promotion to the rank of Captain. This notable advance in the honors of his profession was perhaps received with satisfaction, but we have no sign of it, for in the diaries is the record, "I was sad, and felt myself in the rearward of life. My duties were simple and easily performed. They did not tax my faculties at all, and I felt equal to something beyond them." On the application of Colonel Thayer, Superintendent, and Major Worth, Military Commandant of the corps of cadets, the War Department consented that he should remain on duty at the Academy. In the intervals of occupation he corresponded with the poet Percival and read during the winter Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, Hobbes, Colton, Lucretius, and Franklin's works. He made voluminous notes in speculative philosophy and metaphysics, and arrived at this definition of God: "The great Whole is one, and all the parts agree with all the parts." He records "determined to regard myself impersonally—that is, as an impartial observer. At times I was under great excitement, though externally as quiet as a child. I was constantly inquiring of myself about myself."

These meditations were interrupted by an occurrence of prime importance.



## CHAPTER IX

CONFLICT OF AUTHORITY OVER COURTS OF INQUIRY. SPIRITED  
DEFIANCE OF SUPERINTENDENT AND SECRETARY OF WAR.  
A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE. PROTEST TO PRESIDENT  
ADAMS FOLLOWED BY VOLUNTARY EXILE TO FRONTIER.  
TRIUMPHANT VINDICATION

THE significance and result of this occurrence are indicated in the following carefully prepared statement by the chief actor:

“My service at West Point was interrupted in 1827 by an event which threw me out of the Academy. It occurred in this manner: When Major Thayer first took the Superintendency of the Academy the War Department gave him authority to dismiss cadets upon his own individual order, to enable him to reduce them to subordination and attention to studies. After thus introducing order to the Academy, the power of arbitrary dismissal was surrendered and no longer exercised. Then the Major thought it would aid him in the maintenance of discipline to have the power given him to order Courts of Inquiry—such courts being authorized by the 91st and 92nd Articles of War. For this purpose he drew up what was called an Academic Regulation, giving him the power he desired. This he carried to Washington and there obtained the signature of James Barbour, the Secretary of War. The Secretary being a civilian, and having little knowledge, perhaps, of the Articles of War, was without doubt entirely ignorant of the concluding paragraph of the 92nd Article which limits the power of ordering Courts of Inquiry, prohibiting them when not applied for by the accused party or ordered by the President of the United States. The Secretary of War had no right under the law to sign the Academic

Regulation referred to, giving to Major Thayer the power to order Courts of Inquiry upon his own discretion.

“The Superintendent held this order unpublished for some time without making any use of it; but in the Spring of 1827 a disorder occurred in the cadets’ barracks, the authors of which Major Thayer was unable to discover by ordinary means and he determined to try a Court of Inquiry. Accordingly he issued his order, appointing a court with a Judge Advocate, and I was named as the senior officer of it. The reception of the order gave me the first knowledge I had of the Academic Regulation, and I no sooner read it than I was painfully struck with the idea that a conflict was on hand, for I was well aware of the prohibitory clause in the 92nd Article of War.

“The Court met the following morning at ten o’clock; but the moment the officers assembled it was seen that each one of us, without any consultation, had the same opinion. We all felt that the order of Major Thayer was illegal; that he had not the power and that the Secretary of War himself could not give him the power to order a Court of Inquiry. The law was too plain to be mistaken, and we thought that it would only be necessary to address the Superintendent a letter, briefly stating our objections to proceeding to business under his orders and thereupon further attempt to enforce the order would be abandoned. We accordingly signed such a letter, not as a Court, but as so many officers assembled under the Superintendent’s orders. In this letter, however, we made no direct reference to the 92nd Article of War, thinking it too well known to require it. We merely stated that we felt the want of sufficient authority to proceed under his order.

“This letter was sent to General Macomb, Chief Engineer and Inspector of the Military Academy, through whom its business was done at the seat of government. After about three weeks, the Superintendent issued another order requiring the Court to assemble in obedience to the first order, and it was directed that a letter from General Macomb should be read to the Court, after which the Court would proceed to business under the order. We reassembled and the letter from General Macomb was read to us. General Macomb acknowledged the receipt of the protest against proceeding



under the order of Major Thayer, and went on to say that the protest had been laid before the Secretary of War and the Attorney General of the United States, and that they had decided that the order for the Court was legal; and Major Thayer was authorized, if he thought it necessary, to reassemble the Court, to make known the decision of the Secretary and the Attorney General, and to require the Court to proceed to business.

“When we first assembled we thought that the matter would be ended without going beyond Major Thayer, and did not attach much importance to it. We now saw that we should be obliged to come into collision with two of the highest functionaries of the government on a point of law—one of whom was the law officer of the government, the other all powerful in the selection of officers for duty in the Military Academy.

“We did not hesitate, however. We felt that we were in the right and were not at liberty to compromise matters,—much less to obey an order, touching the rights of persons, which we clearly saw was directly in the teeth of a wise prohibitory provision of the law. We therefore drew up a second letter or protest, reciting the law itself, and then respectfully expressing our opinion that we could not legally proceed to business. In the evening of that day, three of the four officers who signed the protest were placed under arrest,—the youngest officer of the four not being included in the order for arrest.

“This was the first time that I had ever been arrested in the service, and I was somewhat fretted by it, because I felt as competent to form an opinion upon the subject as my superiors in rank. I felt also that this was precisely an occasion upon which an intelligent officer was required to hold and to act upon an independent opinion—the Army Regulations of that day requiring invariable obedience to orders with one specific exception—the exception being ‘whenever the orders are not manifestly against law or reason.’ In this case the order was against both law and reason, the law itself being plainly written and a sufficient reason for it being near at hand. The next morning Major Thayer sent for me in order to say that his action in the matter had been purely official,

and he desired me so to consider it. I told him that of course I could look at it in no other light.

"We remained in arrest a few weeks when an order was received from the War Department relieving us from duty in the Military Academy, and sending us to our several regiments. Now, indeed, I felt aggrieved and outraged. I had expected to be brought before a Court Martial and had prepared myself for a triumphant defence,—intending to lay before the Court the law itself with the full and ample reason for it, and then to show the insufficiency of the order with suitable comments upon the necessity,—and even the supreme duty—imposed upon subordinates to obstruct all attempts to exercise arbitrary power in violation of the clear provisions of law; and I intended to enlarge upon the distinction between *persons* and *things*, by which an officer might strain a point of law in obedience to an order when it affected things merely and admitting of remedy in case of wrong, which compliance would not be allowable in the case of persons, a wrong against whom might not admit of remedy.

"I had hitherto been an Assistant Instructor of Tactics in the department of Major Worth, and now, finding myself suddenly relieved from a duty filled by selection, and ordered to the extreme frontier,—the company of which I was then the Captain being on duty at Fort Snelling, the highest station on the Mississippi River, three hundred miles above any settlement,—I felt very much incensed at the order. I saw clearly that the Secretary of War had no knowledge of the Article of War at the root of the controversy, until his attention was called to it by the protest of the Court, and that when he found that he had no authority to give the Superintendent of the Military Academy the power to order Courts of Inquiry, he had not the manliness to revoke that authority and put matters back where they were under the law, but attempted to screen himself by the exercise of his mere power to scatter the officers whom he had wronged, in the expectation, perhaps, of never hearing from them further on the subject. But I determined that he should hear from me.

"I went forthwith to Washington and presented myself to the Secretary of War, telling him that I had come there to complain of his order; that I considered it a grievance and a



wrong; that I had been relieved from a responsible duty performed by selected officers at a most desirable station and sent to the frontier for an act which I knew entitled me to the thanks of the army and of the government. Mr. Barbour shrugged his shoulders and endeavored to make light of it, stating that it was a mere difference of opinion and of no importance. I admitted that there was a difference of opinion, but that I stood upon the law and was entitled to be sustained in it.

“‘Oh!’ said he, shrugging his shoulders again, ‘it is a mere difference of opinion, and if you don’t choose to obey orders at West Point we will send others there who will obey them.’

“‘Sir,’ said I, ‘I undertake to assure you that you will not find an officer in the army that will obey that order!’

“He still declared that it was a matter of no importance, and I left him and went to see the President. I found Mr. Adams very accessible and civil. He asked me to be seated and listened with perfect patience to my statement, making no interruption whatever. When I had stated the case he laid his hands on a pile of papers and said in brief sentences:

“‘I have just received the papers in that case.—I will examine them. If I find the order legal, I will confirm it; if illegal I shall annul it.’

“I wanted nothing more. I arose immediately and took, my leave with the single remark ‘Mr. President: I shall be perfectly satisfied with your decision.’ For I knew that if he looked at the papers he could form but one opinion, and that it would be in my favor.

“I then obtained temporary recruiting orders for the city of New York, and went there. After some weeks I met Major Worth, who in the most friendly way expressed his regret at losing my services at West Point. I expressed my regret at being ordered from there. Our conversation ended by his asking me if I would permit him to apply for an order for my reinstatement. I told him certainly—he was entirely welcome to do so. He returned to West Point and I soon afterwards received a letter from him, in which he said he had presented the subject of my return to Major Thayer; he said that officer had spoken very kindly of me and wished my

return, but could not apply for it because I held opinions which were in opposition to the exercise of his proper authority; and Major Worth then desired me to write him and let him know whether I had not undergone some change of opinion on the subject.

"I wrote to him stating my conscientious conviction of the justness of my opinion, and that I did not see how I could recede from it,—expressing, however, my very great regret at having been ordered away from West Point and saying that I should return there with the greatest pleasure if invited to do so.

"Major Worth wrote again, urging many considerations why he thought I might relinquish my individual opinions, on the general ground of subordination to orders,—assuring me that there was nothing but this needed, and that Major Thayer would immediately apply for my return. This was placing me in a very trying position. I was warmly attached to my associates at West Point, and to service required of officers at that most charming place,—one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the earth. I felt, with a shudder, that after a brief recruiting duty I must unavoidably be ordered to a frontier service and companionship for which I had no taste and should lose all the advantages of cultivated life at the Military Academy. I nevertheless wrote to Major Worth that, notwithstanding the painful alternative which threatened me, I could not express any change of opinion, since none had taken place. I received several letters from him on this subject along through several months, all very kind on his part, expressing his wish for my return to duty with him.

"At length, in the summer of 1828<sup>1</sup> he wrote to me that Major Thayer would be in New York on his way to Washington City, and wished to see me personally, naming time and place. I called upon him upon his arrival in New York and we had a long conversation on the subject. I thoroughly explained my view of the matter to him. He endeavored to talk me

<sup>1</sup> During this interval, Captain Hitchcock was on recruiting service, head quarters at New York. It was an agreeable station, but he was restless and discontented. He felt that he ought to be training the cadets, and in August, 1827, he wrote to a friend from Fort Wood, on Bedloe's Island: "Nature abhors a state of rest. I have nothing in this world to do, or next to nothing, and yet I can no more sit still than I can hold a fire in my hands."



out of it, with all the winning power he was master of, and told me that nothing stood in the way of my return to West Point but my opinion of his right to exercise an authority given him by the War Department; and that if I would waive that opinion, he was going to Washington and would ask an order for my reinstatement. I told him I did not see how it was possible for me to do it.

“He then said that on his arrival at Washington he would refer the matter to the President and the Secretary of War, and that, if they annulled his authority he would, at any rate, ask for my return; but that, if they reaffirmed it, ‘would you not,’ asked he, ‘feel it your duty out of a becoming respect to such high authority to yield your individual opinion?’—explaining that he had no wish in connection with it, except the claims of consistency; that it would not become him to ask for the services of an officer at West Point whose declared opinion was adverse to the exercise of authority with which he was clothed by a War Department order.

“I told him in answer that as I then felt I could not say that I would obey the order, however highly sanctioned, but that, if he pleased, I would await his return from Washington, when we would have another conversation on the subject. After a few weeks I called to see him again, on his return from Washington, when he told me that the Secretary of War was absent, and that he had not found time or opportunity to bring the subject to the notice of the President, and that in short nothing had been done.

“I then considered the subject finally disposed of, and saw nothing to delay my departure to the Northwest. Accordingly, in the fall of the year I received an order to conduct a body of recruits to the Northwest, and after distributing them to several designated stations I was directed to proceed to my company at Fort Snelling. I distributed the recruits, about 400, and proceeded to Fort Crawford, Prairie duChien, arriving there towards the end of November, 1828, preparatory to going up the river to Fort Snelling. I had travelled by land from Green Bay to Fort Winnebago at the head of Fox River and thence descended the Wisconsin in what was called a Mackinaw boat, living a camp life, without any opportunity of attending to my toilet.

“At Fort Crawford I found my old friend, Maj. Stephen W. Kearney, in command, with several officers whom I formerly knew in my service with the regiment in the south. Upon landing I reported personally to Major Kearney whom I met going to dinner at the officers’ mess. He insisted upon my going with him immediately, and I attempted to excuse myself, not being in trim, as I said, for the table,—not having seen a razor for several days, and it was not the custom then to go without shaving. He would not listen to any excuse, but led me to the mess room, where I found several officers standing, who were addressed by Major Kearney in mock form of language, ‘Gentlemen: I have the pleasure to introduce Captain Hitchcock, and I assure you that when he is dressed and shaved, he is a very proper man.’ This was well received as a piece of fun, and I was cordially greeted by the officers.

“I remained several weeks at Fort Crawford, waiting for the river to freeze in order to go up to Fort Snelling on the ice, recommended to me as the best if not the only practicable way of reaching the place at that season of the year. During this time I fully explained to Major Kearney the circumstances under which I had left West Point. He inquired what order had been issued by the President upon the subject. I told him that no order had been published as yet, but that I was not going to allow the subject to be dropped.

“In fulfilment of this purpose I at once addressed a letter to the President, calling his attention to his promise, and to my entire dependence upon his sense of justice, insisting upon the wrong that had been done me and others through the existence of an illegal order, and that I felt it my duty to do what lay in my power to have the order revoked to prevent its doing any further mischief. Upon showing the letter to Major Kearney he advised me strongly not to send it, because it would necessarily go through the hands of the Secretary of War to whom it contained several not particularly respectful references. I had characterized the act of the Secretary of War as a dishonorable evasion. Major K. again advised me not to send it, but I told him it was the truth and I did not care for the consequences. I told him that the letter should go; that I did not care what the Secretary might think about it; that



he had already done his worst in regard to me and that I had determined that the illegal order should be revoked.

"Some days after my letter had gone, one evening Major Kearney sent his compliments to me: he wished to see me at his quarters. A mail had just arrived from the East with letters and papers,—a rare event of much interest at a remote station in midwinter. I went to the Major's quarters. He met me with a cheerful smile, and held up before me a newspaper with a paragraph for me to read, at the same time playfully putting one of his hands over my heart, saying: 'I told you you had better not send that letter to the President!'

"Without making any answer I read the paragraph in the paper. It stated that Major Worth had resigned the post of Commandant of Cadets at West Point and that I had been appointed in his stead! The mail brought a very kind note from Major Thayer enclosing me a copy of the order, and requesting me to lose no time in joining him. Here was a promotion for me and a very considerable change in my destination. I immediately prepared for a midwinter journey, starting the middle of January from Fort Crawford."

The reader who follows the course of this history cannot fail to observe that the instance just narrated is typical of several similar episodes in the military life of Hitchcock, who seems never to have hesitated a moment to disobey and defy his elders or superiors whenever he felt sure that their orders were a clear violation of the laws enacted to govern him and them. The reader will not fail also to infer, what was the exact fact, that during his long service at West Point, Captain Hitchcock had become one of the best informed officers and one of the most expert masters of military discipline and evolution in the entire American army, so that he was often applied to on occasions calling for unusual skill or science. On his way back to West Point he writes in his diary:

"The Superintendent has selected me notwithstanding my declared and persistent opposition to the exercise of his authority. This seems to me alike honorable to the Superintendent and myself; for, while it ought to secure my name from any imputation of having lent myself to unjust measures, it shows no less clearly that the Superintendent has only the

good of the institution at heart and does not wish the presence of a submissive instrument for improper purposes."

Some time later he gave the following free-hand sketch of his journey back to the beloved Academy:

"I was two months in making the journey from Fort Crawford to West Point. There were no railroads in those days, and even travelling by regular coaches had not been established in many parts of the country. I went seventy miles on horseback to Galena with a pack horse for my little baggage. I staid one night in a small log hut occupied by a miner and his wife, who insisted on sleeping upon the rough floor and giving up to me the only bed. It was the way of the country, travellers being thus accommodated at moderate rates, and it helped the settlers along. From Galena to St. Louis I went by a light Dearborn wagon. We met the first stage coach ever put upon the road. There was but one house where its passengers and ours stopped all night. This solitary house belonged to the ferryman and it was the site of the present flourishing city of Peoria. After a supper of bacon, corn bread, and coffee, a 'shakedown' was prepared on the floor, extending nearly across the building, and we all threw ourselves upon it, our feet towards the blazing fire. One snoring passenger disturbed all the rest, and there was hardly any sleep that night. Tin cups were put in occasional requisition and everybody took a drink, some of the party continuing to imbibe until after midnight.

"At St. Louis I was detained several days waiting for a promised steamer, but an ice jam in the Mississippi damped our hopes, and with one other man, I took passage across Illinois in a rickety old post-coach with tattered curtains, a cold and dreary vehicle. After some days this coach broke down and we abandoned it for an extemporized contrivance, called in that region a 'jumper,' consisting of a crate or dry-goods box supported on a couple of saplings serving for runners and shafts. In this comfortable affair we travelled some days and when we had become thoroughly tired of it we exchanged it for a city hack which we met coming from Louisville, paying the party some reasonable or unreasonable difference in cash. We were quite cheerful for a little time when we ran over a stump and broke the axle before the horses



could be stopped. The fine coach was permanently disabled and we at last hired a common wagon without springs or conveniences of any sort and continued our journey for some distance when one of the hind wheels of that broke. The driver cut down a small tree, tied one end on top of the iron axle and contrived to support the wrecked vehicle for some distance further.

"After innumerable vicissitudes of an unpleasant character, I reached New York in March, just in time to take the first North River steamer after the breaking up of the ice; and reported at West Point. I was received by Major Thayer with the greatest possible kindness, and without any allusion whatever to the cause of my having been sent away from the Academy; in fact, the difficulty that had caused our separation was never afterwards spoken of.

"On one of my visits to Washington City subsequently I inquired at the Engineer Department whether anything had ever been done about the order of the War Department giving the Superintendent of the Academy authority to order Courts of Inquiry, and an officer informed me that an informal note from the Secretary of War had been sent to that office, directing that no such Courts should be ordered in future. My explanation of the matter was that the President had fulfilled his promise to me, and had directed that the order should be annulled, but that the Secretary of War had not the ingenuousness to annul the order openly, but preferred merely to direct that no more such Courts should be organized under his order."

Judging from his scanty diary from 1825 to 1828, Captain Hitchcock devoted much of his spare time to solitary meditation and self-questioning. He is evidently heretical in many respects and alludes to "the various fables that have occupied the world in explanation of the origin of things."

It was the spring of 1829 (March 13th) when he again reached West Point and assumed command of the corps of cadets, "having maintained my principles and my sense of rectitude," he records in his diary with excusable exultation.

The following four years at West Point were years of quiet satisfaction. There is in the diary much visiting, some reluctant dining out, short travels, thoughtful comment on

life and nature—especially human nature—but somewhat less of metaphysics and serious introspection than of old.<sup>1</sup>

Diary, 1831: "I dined with Washington Irving. He looks like his portraits,—mild, amiable, benevolent."

Diary: "July 14, 1832. Arrival of Mrs. General Scott at my house with her family to escape the cholera,<sup>2</sup> the General being absent in what was called the Blackhawk campaign." The lady had fled with her children from New York City to West Point, and remained there four months, till her husband returned from his campaign in the West and the pestilence was notably abated.

<sup>1</sup> In 1830 and 1831, Edgar Allan Poe was a cadet at West Point under the instruction of Captain Hitchcock, and for the first six months stood near the head of his class, but becoming restless and indifferent, he was cashiered and dismissed the service.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of later date: "The cholera"made its appearance on this continent in 1832, striking first at Quebec and shortly after at the heart of New York, throwing the whole city into the greatest consternation. It was said that 60,000 people left the city in three days. I went down to see how it looked. It was nearly deserted; very still; no business; the very gutters whitewashed for cleanliness."



## CHAPTER X

COMMANDANT OF CORPS OF CADETS. INSTRUCTS LEADERS  
IN WAR OF REBELLION. GENERAL JACKSON INTERFERES  
WITH DISCIPLINE OF ACADEMY. ENCOURAGES INSUBORDINA-  
TION. CAPTAIN HITCHCOCK EXPOSTULATES IN PERSON.  
AGAIN LEAVES ACADEMY FOR ACTIVE SERVICE

THE early thirties were years of quiet study and calm content with Captain Hitchcock. His associations were those he so much prized. But an evil time was again at hand, for which General Jackson was responsible. A detailed narrative of this proceeds as follows:

“Colonel Thayer, the Superintendent of the Academy, had introduced a body of regulations for its government, which appeared hardly to admit of improvement. The system of studies had been perfectly arranged and the discipline of the corps was unexceptionable. A due enforcement of these regulations was all that was required. Semi-annual examinations took place with the most admirable results, the meritorious cadets receiving due commendation, and the idle and negligent receiving fitting rebuke. When serious misconduct occurred the culpable were brought to trial before duly organized courts-martial, and allowed all the privileges of a defence before a judgment was rendered.

“This beautiful system was first broken in upon by President Jackson, who, without any proper knowledge of the Academy, its officers, its professors, or the nature of the studies pursued, undertook to control the Academy by his personal prejudices. Some three or four students, whom he had recommended and patronized, had been dismissed for negligence and misconduct, by due operation of the academic regulations and the decisions of courts-martial. He listened to the *ex*

*parte* stories told by the young men who had been sent home in disgrace and conceived the most extreme dislike of Colonel Thayer and the system of instruction and discipline pursued under him. The fact was that every student, whether in the recitation room, in the examination hall, or before a court-martial, stood absolutely upon his own merit and was not affected by personal influence. The officers and professors had one object only, and that was to promote the best interests of the Academy and provide competent officers for the army of the United States. President Jackson did not understand or appreciate the institution, and, governed by his extreme prejudices, undertook to overrule and set aside the deliberate judgment of the Academic Board and, by his mere arbitrary will, to nullify the decision of its courts-martial without any just grounds whatever. Cadets who had been ordered to be discharged would appear at Washington, either personally or by friends, with the almost invariable result that an order would be issued by the President annulling the judgments and restoring them to their classes. A cadet who was really a disgrace to the Academy would frequently be thus returned to the institution after dismissal, to scoff at the regulations he had defied and furnish an example by which great numbers of the thoughtless would become also reckless.

“Among evils that had crept into the Academy during the canvass preceding the election of President Jackson was a disposition in the Corps of Cadets to discuss ‘politics’—as they are called—while the science of politics, which is almost unknown even in the legislative assemblages of the nation, was a subject almost entirely beyond the reach of these immature youths just laying the foundation of an education. This tendency proceeded so far that a young man—certainly one of the very worst in the Academy—by the name of Norris, actually planted a hickory pole in the centre of the ordinary parade ground of the corps. Norris had acquired his political tendencies and habits among the lower class of people in the city of New York. His act of planting a hickory upon the public parade ground was so evidently a violation of propriety and good order that he was rebuked for it by the Superintendent, and the rebuke was duly reported to the President as a grievous outrage upon the young man.



“I had several conversations with Colonel Thayer in consideration of the subject, and we agreed that the evil influence was spreading, he noticing it chiefly in the growing neglect of study, while I observed it principally in the tendency to disorder. Instead of advancing in study and striving to rise in the scale of merit, the attention of the cadets now seemed drawn to a consideration of means by which they might escape the penalties of idleness and neglect of duty. The temper of the whole corps had become more or less corrupted, so that, instead of looking upon the professors and officers as their friends working for their advancement in life, they regarded them rather as enemies seeking occasion to punish them.

“Much dissatisfied with this state of things I called on Colonel Thayer and asked his permission to go to Washington and see the President personally and convince him, if I could, of the importance of having the regulations of the Academy duly observed. He answered at once that he would give me an order for it. I had not thought of this, but hoped simply to see the President, feeling perfect confidence in the justness of my views and some reliance upon my ability to impress them upon him. For surely, thought I, a reasonable man must be accessible to reason. The maxim is well enough, but unfortunately does not always find fit materials to work upon. Colonel Thayer directed me to say to the President that if the regulations were not such as he approved, he should cause them to be modified till they should meet his approbation; but that, at all events, it was absolutely necessary that the rules should be enforced, for the value, if not the existence, of the institution depended upon it. Under these instructions I proceeded to Washington and arrived there on November 24, 1832, well prepared by large experience in the Academy and by much reflection to lay the subject fully before the President; and I did not intend to lose my point by any want of a direct and clear statement of the difficulty.

“The President was seated, and heard the principal portion of what I had to say without exhibition of any particular temper; but the moment he began to speak he became excited, and spoke of the ‘tyranny’ of Colonel Thayer and, rising from his chair, he stalked before me, swinging his arms as if in a rage and speaking of the case of

Norris, of which I saw that he had been informed or misinformed.

“ ‘Why,’ said he, ‘the autocrat of the Russias could n’t exercise more power!’

“ Upon this I broke out with as much excitement as he himself had exhibited, and said, ‘Mr. President, you are misinformed on this subject and do not understand it.’

“ Whether he saw from my manner that I was not likely to be overborne by any affected passion of his own, I cannot say, but he immediately changed his entire tone and manner and resumed his seat. He said that Norris had only done what the people in New York and everywhere else were doing; to which I answered that the people of New York and everywhere else might do many things which students at West Point could not be permitted to do. I explained to him how incongruous it was for boys at a public school to employ themselves in making political demonstrations on the parade ground instead of attending to their studies. Our interview ended by his asking me to request General Gratiot, Chief Engineer and *ex officio* Inspector of the Military Academy (on whom I was about to call), to see him at once. I communicated the message to General Gratiot and waited in his office until his return. On coming back he said to me, ‘Your visit has done something; for the President has directed the academic regulations to be examined and reported on by General Jesup and General Jones.’

“ I returned to West Point and reported to the Superintendent. After a few weeks it was communicated to Colonel Thayer that after an examination of the regulations the two officers had assured the President that no change in them was required. Here matters rested for a time; but three or four months later there was another arbitrary interference by the President, showing that he had no regard for the regulations and was determined to substitute for them his own personal will.

“ Hereupon (July 1, 1833,) Colonel Thayer resigned his position as Superintendent. I determined to do likewise and asked to be relieved from duty at the Academy, but in accordance with the earnest request of Colonel Thayer and his successor,



Colonel De Rusey,<sup>1</sup> I consented to remain for a few weeks. At the end of this time an order came relieving me from duty at West Point.<sup>2</sup> This order was accompanied by a kind note from General Macomb, offering me unasked recruiting duty in the city of Boston, to which place I proceeded in the summer of 1833. My entire connection with the Military Academy had extended to nearly twelve years, first as a cadet, then as an Assistant Instructor of Tactics, and finally as the Military Commandant of the Corps of Cadets."

It should be added that as early as June, 1832, Captain Hitchcock, morbidly remorseful on account of a life of ease, had written to Colonel Thayer requesting to be relieved from his agreeable service at the Academy that he might join his company on duty in the far West. Colonel Thayer replied that he could not be spared at the Academy. Captain Hitchcock then wrote to Colonel Thayer as follows:

"SIR:—Under present circumstances of Indian alarms on the Northwestern frontier, I feel it to be my duty to request you to call the attention of the Department of War to the fact that my company is on that frontier.

"In abstaining from expression of a strong desire to exchange my present station for frontier service, I trust it is unnecessary to declare my readiness to participate in the fatigues imposed upon my brothers in arms by present contingencies in the West."

The time had now come when the War Department could avail itself of his generous offer. He was therefore ordered to Boston to recruit his company preparatory to going with the recruits to the Northwest.

<sup>1</sup> Diary: "Colonel De Rusey came and also begged me to remain on the ground that I knew the routine of duty in the Academy and he needed my services."

<sup>2</sup> Diary: "Almost every officer on duty at the Point was changed except the regularly commissioned professors."

## CHAPTER XI

JACKSON'S HOSTILITY PREVENTS PROMOTION. NOMINATED BY HENRY CLAY TO BE GOVERNOR OF LIBERIA. DECLINES TO BE "VIRTUALLY A KING." TO THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI WITH ZACHARY TAYLOR. INDIAN HOSTILITIES AND THE PEACE PIPE

**D**URING his connection with the Military Academy, Captain Hitchcock had under his personal instruction most of the men who afterwards achieved a high position of command during the Civil War, either in the Union or the Rebel army. Among these men whom he had taught were Meigs, Sherman, Sedgwick, C. F. Smith, Hooker, Meade, Pleasanton, Pemberton, Early, Emory, Wessells, Curtis, Cullom, Keyes, Magruder, Casey, Buford, Humphreys, Heintzelman, Leonidas Polk, Joseph E. Johnston, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis.

As Commandant of Cadets he stood very high. But he had pursued his duties resolutely: he had not been sycophantic or obsequious to President Jackson, and therefore his promotion, now due, met an insuperable obstacle at the White House. His friends helped to organize a regiment of dragoons for him, but, though his friend Kearney was made Lieutenant-Colonel, the majority went elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

During this year there was seriously wanted a strong, conscientious, and exemplary man for governor of the prosperous colony of Liberia, and, the president of the Colonization Society asking Major-General Macomb, the hero of Platts-

<sup>1</sup> Diary: "Colonel Kearney made an attempt to have me appointed Major and his effort was warmly seconded by the distinguished Commander-in-chief, but there was an opponent much more formidable: President Jackson did not forget my protest in favor of discipline, and he refused to appoint me."



burg, who had climbed from the ranks to be Commander-in-chief of the army, to recommend such a person, he unhesitatingly named Captain Hitchcock. The society at once and by unanimous vote confirmed the selection and its president wrote to him, "Our colony requires a gentleman of talents, experience, and practical energy in the government of men, and we feel entire confidence in your distinguished qualifications." General Macomb wrote, "I am decidedly of the opinion that you are well qualified for the office, both on account of your talents and firmness and because of your enterprising disposition." Henry Clay was president of the Society. It was an honorable position, and one of Captain Hitchcock's friends wrote him, "The Governor of Liberia will be virtually a king." General Macomb offered him a leave of absence for a year to try the experiment, but the Captain did not wish to be king, and the appointment was resolutely declined, though the offer was repeatedly renewed, with many compliments and blandishments, during three years.

These years were eventful ones to Captain Hitchcock. Being relieved of recruiting, in the spring of 1834 he went to Mobile on a visit to his mother and his brother Henry, and thence to New Orleans, and after a brief sojourn ascended the Mississippi on a steamboat to the head-quarters of his regiment at Fort Crawford in "Wisconsin Territory." He entertained himself on the boat with some books and his flute.<sup>1</sup> Arrived at Galena from St. Louis in eight days! The Captain records in his diary:

"It is an everlasting job to get up this river. I wonder what it was made so long for." Arrived at Prairie du Chien in April, and at Fort Crawford "was kindly welcomed" by his old friend Col. Zachary Taylor.

"Arrived this morning just before breakfast and Colonel Taylor immediately told me to make his house my home till I should arrange my quarters. This courtesy is evidence of kindness which in this case has been made more apparent by the manner. He is full of spleen against a variety of the measures of the government, and, having been a Jackson man and being now

<sup>1</sup> Diary: "I am certainly too well practised with the flute and have too much music for an amateur. I can excuse myself only by explaining that I have much need of music to pass my time."

an Anti, he is, like most converts, rather warm. This morning he began reading to me what he called 'a little note to a member of Congress.' It ran entirely through three sheets of letter paper closely written. He is very long-winded and by writing so voluminously must have defeated his own efforts. He is, however, a faithful officer and has probably rendered the government as much personal service as any officer in the army. I breakfasted with him this morning before six o'clock—his usual hour."

But Captain Hitchcock, though second to the commandant, had annoyances of his own during this spring of 1834. He was closely surrounded by officers who knew little of books and cared less and who possessed few conversational resources, but who made themselves at home in his quarters and occupied "the precious hours," as he calls them, with scandal, quarrels, and boasting, dull frivolities and old and coarse jokes. After they had wasted a month of his evenings by besieging him in his own rooms, he breaks out in his diary with: "They have gone at last! Their talk is utterly unsuited to my taste and temper. The devil take that story of the snuff! I heard it before the beginning of time!" He often reflects upon his loneliness, which he calls "the melancholy privilege of age"—at thirty-five!

During May he went 250 miles up the Mississippi to Fort Snelling and returned. Diary: "The presence of the whites is a blight upon the Indian character, which, in its own native simplicity, is far less objectionable than is generally supposed." In October Colonel Taylor resigned the command and left Fort Crawford, and Captain Hitchcock succeeded to the post for sixty days, becoming at the same time Indian Agent to the tribes on the Upper Mississippi. The country was kept in a tumult by the continual wars between the Sioux, Winnebagoes, and Sacs and Foxes. Numerous murders were committed and the Captain had his hands full. He had no time to join in the "hunting parties" of the garrison, even if he had possessed the inclination, but he was not a sportsman<sup>1</sup> in any sense

<sup>1</sup> "Fort Crawford, 1835. When I was in Mobile my brother gave me a very beautiful gun, and when I came here I thought I would use it, but after two or three attempts I laid it aside and for more than four months I have not touched it. Friends here gave me two dogs to encourage me: my neglect of them has made me a stranger to them and the soldiers have completely got possession of them."



of that word. He replenished the post library and read much, recording in his diary an impromptu aphorism to the effect that "No man knows how little he knows unless he thinks a great deal and reads a good many books."

During three months he studied hard to master the higher requirements of his profession, fought over again in his quarters the great battles of history, became familiar with Jomini, acquainted himself with all arms of the service, put his troops through evolutions till they were tired, and made suggestions to the War Department for the revision of the Army Regulations which won an expression of gratification from Major-General Macomb, Commander-in-chief of the army, who submitted the whole book to the critic for "further alteration or improvement either in language or matter."

"Feb. 16, 1835. I am in a peculiar situation here. I do not wish to depreciate the merits of my brother officers, but it is certain that their habits if not their tastes are different from mine, and, while a majority of them congregate and either play cards or smoke or drink or all three together, I am left in solitude or compelled to choose between those resorts and the company of the few ladies there are at the Prairie. . . . I am certainly out of place here. My life is calculated to make me an object of envy and hate to most of those around me. In the first place, I do not join in any of the vices of the garrison—not one. I neither drink, play cards, nor even indulge in the smallest license of language. Next, I am disposed to literature and sometimes indicate that I read or think, and it is mostly in a field unexplored by the others. I visit the ladies and am almost the only officer who does visit them, and this is calculated to move to jealousy."

8th May, 1835. "Yesterday was consumed in business, some acting and some as witnesses. The Sacs and Fox Indians brought with them the murderers of the lodge of Winnebagoes last fall. The murderers of the Menomenees have been confined here during the winter, having been surrendered by the Sacs and Foxes on the application of the Indian Agent last fall. The three tribes, Sacs and Foxes (known as one tribe), the Winnebagoes and Menomenees, were represented yesterday in council and made a treaty of peace. The process was this:

"Notice having been given by the Indian Agent, the Winne-

bagoes and Menomenees assembled at the council room and were all seated when the Sacs and Foxes came up from the steam-boat in solemn procession. A chief with a peace pipe led; immediately behind him were the four murderers who had occasioned the difficulty; these were bound by means of strings of wampum securing their elbows behind, their hands and limbs otherwise free. They had no blankets on, wearing only strouds and leggings. Then followed the remainder, some thirty or forty Sacs and Foxes. As they approached the council they halted a few minutes and then advanced slowly into the council room singing to the very door in a low solemn chant a death song. They entered the council in silence and stood opposite the other tribes, who occupied one half of the room. They stood in silence I suppose fifteen minutes or more. The chief with the pipe then commenced addressing the Winnebagoes, saying with many repetitions in substance that they (the Sacs and Foxes) had come up to make a peace with the Winnebagoes and Menomenees; that the murders committed last fall were perpetrated by individuals (bad) and not by the nation; that the nation had surrendered the guilty but that he hoped to find the two tribes disposed to forgive and smoke with them in peace. 'I shall now offer you the pipe of peace and as the smoke ascends I hope it will carry with it to the clouds all dark and unfriendly thoughts,' etc.

"He then went forward after lighting the pipe with a piece of spunk, and offering the pipe it was received by the Winnebagoes, each one taking one or two whiffs. Some would direct the smoke up to the clouds, in reference no doubt to the sentiment in the speech. When the chief came to a Menomenee he held his blanket over his lips and would not touch the pipe. The chief held it in silence before him not less than three or four minutes—it might have been longer—during which time there was perfect silence. At length he withdrew and, taking his former stand, expressed his gratification that the Winnebagoes had accepted the pipe. He hoped they would now live as one family, as they formerly had done, etc., etc. Those of the Winnebagoes who had lost relations now advanced and, each taking a Sac prisoner, led them forward among themselves, seated them on mats and loosened their arms and took off



from their necks heavy strings of wampum. They then took new blankets and put one upon each and resumed their seats.

“Keokuck, the principal Sac chief, who before had said nothing, now arose and with great emphasis addressed the nations, first expressing his happiness that the Winnebagoes had accepted their offers of peace, and then offered persuasions, to the Menomenees, saying much that had been said before and calling upon them to forgive the acts of individuals and not plunge the two nations in a war on their account—to have regard to their wives and children who must suffer in such a struggle. “He recollected the time when the two tribes had but one fire, one kettle, one pipe. Let it be so again, etc. I am now going to offer you my hand,” and then with a very imposing presence he advanced to them and with evident reluctance and coldness they accepted his hand. He resumed his talk and thanked them. Another chief then talked in a similar strain and going forward gave the Menomenees a quantity of wampum, which they accepted. The peace was now considered complete and many talks were made by the Sacs and Foxes—all expressing pretty much the same sentiment—happiness to find themselves among friends. One Winnebago made a speech and declared himself perfectly satisfied—that the dead could not be called to life, that the Sac nation had done all they could to make amends. This Winnebago was a principal sufferer. They were all told then by the agent that they must sign a treaty to be sent to their great father, the President.

“I was requested then to play secretary and wrote out a treaty at the dictation of General Street, which was signed by the head men of the tribes and witnessed by General Street, Colonel Taylor, and sundry others. Some doubts had been expressed by two or three of the officers whether the Menomenees were perfectly satisfied, as they had not smoked and had said nothing. But the Indians understood their accepting the wampum as it appeared, for I proposed asking them distinctly whether they were willing to have the prisoners in the garrison delivered to their friends and they answered in the affirmative. This was declared before they signed the treaty. Before the evening set in Colonel Taylor ordered the prisoners released and the whole are now on their way to their ‘grounds.’”

Days of melancholy introspection were broken in upon by a letter from his brother Henry at Mobile, who had been elected Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama. The judge had become not only very popular but wealthy, and he now offered to the Captain splendid pecuniary inducements to resign his commission and live the quiet life of a successful planter. For the social prejudice against army officers still persisted, and it was something of a trial to Captain Hitchcock's friends that he should be condemned to such an obscure and unrewarded profession. Col. Zachary Taylor, on being consulted with, advised the acceptance of the offer, but suggested a visit to Mobile to consider the matter after being in possession of all important details. Thereupon he applied for leave of absence for four months.

The request was promptly granted by the War Department, and Captain Hitchcock left Fort Crawford for Mobile about October 1st. Arrived at that city, Judge Henry Hitchcock explained to his military brother the opportunities which Mobile presented for success in business, and offered to give him a piece of property there which returned an annual income of \$10,000, his main purpose, of course, being to withdraw the Captain from the army in hope of benefiting him. The Captain, after much thoughtful consideration, declined all offers, and announced that he should permanently retain the profession which he had chosen.



## CHAPTER XII

IN MOBILE ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE. NEWS OF DADE MASSACRE.  
ORIGIN OF SEMINOLE WAR. GADSDEN'S TREATY. INDIANS  
DECEIVED. FORGERY, BRIBERY, AND PERJURY. WAS JACK-  
SON A PARTY TO THE FRAUD? OSCEOLA'S REVENGE

WHILE the munificent proposal was being discussed in Mobile in January, 1836, Captain Hitchcock received a note from his friend and former pupil Lieut. Silas Casey, a young officer on duty at Tampa Bay in Florida, reporting the details of the defeat and massacre by the Seminole Indians of Major Dade and more than 100 men on their march from Tampa to Fort King. The recipient forwarded this note by rapid post to Washington, and it is said to have been the first news which the government received of this terrible tragedy. A meeting to raise troops was held at once in Mobile, and Captain Hitchcock was offered the command of the regiment. He held his acceptance of the offer in suspense while the men were assembling.

There had always been irritations between the Seminoles and their white neighbors, chiefly on account of the slaves who escaped from Georgia and found a refuge in the swamps of the peninsula. The State authorities demanded a return of the fugitives, and the Seminoles made answer that to catch runaway negroes and send them back to their alleged owners was no part of their business or their duty, and they refused to obey the command. The invasion of the peninsula by sheriffs and the consequent concealment of the fugitives by their brown friends marked the beginning of the hostilities that became known as the "Florida War."

"Say no more about my withdrawal from the army," remarked the officer to his generous brother; "an Indian war

has broken out and duty calls me to it." Surrendering his leave of absence he offered himself as a volunteer aid when General Gaines arrived on Jan. 18th. His offer was eagerly accepted and the General called him to his staff to perform the duties of Assistant Adjutant-General.

The great war with the Seminoles had obviously begun. Who began it? Were the Indians alone to blame? Or were they even chiefly to blame? These questions were thoughtfully considered in the light of all the facts by the subject of this history some years later, and, after much research and many conferences with the principals engaged, General Hitchcock wrote the following account as an approximate answer:

"As early as 1823, a treaty (ratified in 1824) was made by the government of the United States with the Seminole<sup>1</sup> or Florida Indians, by which the Indians surrendered to the government their entire coast, with a breadth of about twenty miles extent of country, fixing a northern boundary running nearly east and west through where Palatka is situated; and the government stipulated expressly to secure to the Indians certain specified benefits for the period of twenty years. This was called 'the treaty of Camp Moultrie.' But when General Jackson became the President of the United States, six years later, he determined to remove all of the Indians in the Southern States, including Florida, to the west of the Mississippi River. For this purpose he sent agents among the various tribes to open negotiations with them, inviting them to enter into other treaties stipulating for their immediate emigration. This object was, in the main, accomplished, but not without fraud on the part of some of the agents, which was countenanced by President Jackson. The Cherokee and the Seminole Indians were especially and grossly defrauded, resulting in a war with the latter of several years' duration, involving government disbursements more than sufficient to pay for

<sup>1</sup> The name Seminoles signifies runaways in the language of the Creek nation, to which this tribe originally belonged, according to Catlin. They were also called Isti-Semole, or wild men, on account of their being principally hunters and attending but little to farming. Catlin speaks of them in 1837-8 as "occupying the peninsula of Florida; semi-civilized, partly agricultural. The government has succeeded in removing about one half of them to the Arkansas, during the past four years, at the expense of \$32,000,000, the lives of 28 or 30 officers, and 600 soldiers."



the whole country five times over in any honest dealings. To briefly rehearse the facts in the case:

“A treaty was drawn up in 1832, in the city of Washington, for the emigration of the tribe and Colonel Gadsden, then a resident of Charleston, South Carolina, who had formerly been a staff officer with the President when in the army as Major-General, was sent to the Seminoles to offer the prepared treaty for their acceptance. The chiefs were called together by Colonel Gadsden at Payne’s Landing near the northern boundary of the Seminole country. That tribe had a chief named Miccanopy,<sup>1</sup> whom they dignified with the title of king; a very portly, fleshy, and dull man, who had with him a runaway negro from Pensacola, named Abram, universally recognized in the character of sense-bearer to the king, who was never known to do anything against the counsel of the runaway negro. Indians and negroes easily lived together under the extraordinary conditions that, whilst the Indian claimed superiority over the negro and held him a slave, in virtue of his superior courage, the negro maintained a sort of ascendancy over the Indian by something like superior intelligence and a little education, made effective for the most part in his intercourse with the whites; most of the negroes among the Southern Indians being runaway slaves.

“When the chiefs were assembled, with Abram not only as sense-bearer but as interpreter, Colonel Gadsden disclosed the object of his mission, which was met at once by an answer that they had made a treaty with the United States, by which they were guaranteed certain interests in the country they occupied for a period of twenty years, several years of which remained unexpired; and they wished that time to be passed over, when they would be willing to talk about another treaty. Colonel Gadsden explained and talked with the Indians in that

<sup>1</sup> Mick-e-no-páh, “top-governor” of the tribe, commanded in the defeat and massacre of Major Dade’s command, Dec. 28, 1835. When the war broke out he owned 100 negroes and was raising large and valuable crops of corn and cotton. He is described by M. M. Cohen in his *Notices of Florida* as “of low, stout, and gross stature, and what is called loggy in his movements; his face bloated and carbuncled; eyes heavy and dull, and with a mind like his person. Colonel Gadsden told me, at Payne’s Landing,” continues Cohen, “that after having double rations he complained of starving. He reminds me of the heroes of the Trojan War, who would eat up a whole lamb, or half a calf.”

day's council, without making any impression upon them. King Miccanopy made but one answer, repeating again and again that the Indians had made one treaty, by which they were entitled to remain undisturbed in their country for twenty years, etc., etc. This first day's council was a pattern which was exactly followed through several days without making the slightest progress.

“But in these councils Colonel Gadsden fully discovered the character and influence of Abram, and he determined to confer with him privately and see what he could be induced to agree to. It was finally arranged to add an article to the treaty prepared in Washington, to the effect that the Indians should appoint a delegation of six of their tribe, to be conducted to their proposed new country west of the Mississippi by an agent of the government, and it was agreed that if this delegation approved of the country, the treaty was to be made valid; but this could be secured only by means of another article which operated upon and was intended to be a bribe of the interpreter. Under pretence of providing compensation for the services of Abram, it was stipulated that, upon the ratification of the treaty, he should be paid \$200, which was a large sum in the eyes of a runaway slave in a country where very little money was ever seen. That this was intended for a bribe became certain when, subsequently, Colonel Gadsden reported in person to President Jackson his efforts in securing the treaty and stated in the presence of Captain Thruston of the army, who informed the writer of this article of it, that he never could have got the treaty through if he had not bribed the negro interpreter. But, precisely in connection with this bribe, there grew up a misunderstanding between King Miccanopy and the government agents.

“Six of the tribe were deputed by the chiefs to go to the West, and examine the new country proposed for the tribe. They were placed under the care of a Major Phagan, who took them to the West, passing beyond Fort Gibson near the mouth of the Grand River; and having shown them the country, he returned to Fort Gibson, on his way back to Florida. While at Fort Gibson—and the authority for this statement is the officer at that post who affirmed the facts to the writer of this—Major Phagan submitted to the Indians a paper and asked



them to sign it, expressing their approval of the country, with the design, by means of that paper, to complete the treaty according to one of the articles added by Colonel Gadsden, as stated above. The Indians refused to sign the paper, saying that they had no authority to do it, explaining that they had been ordered to go and see the new country, and then to return to their king and report their *opinion* about it, when the king and his chiefs were to decide whether they were to accept the treaty or not. Major Phagan would not allow them to take this course, insisting that they should sign the paper before he would proceed with them on the journey home; and under this duress they finally signed the paper, which was sent to Washington city as the evidence required that the treaty was now complete. The paper was not signed in the presence of commissioners, but was accepted by Governor Stokes and others, who had been appointed commissioners to execute some business with the Creek Indians already in the West, among whom it was proposed to incorporate the Seminoles.

“When, some time after this, it became known to the king and his chiefs that the government expected a fulfilment of the treaty on their part, they denied the authority of the six deputed men to make the treaty good, alleging that they had been sent to the West merely to look at the country, but were required to return to the proper government of the tribe and report what they saw of it, when the king and his chiefs would decide, themselves, whether they would accept the treaty or not; affirming that this was according to the treaty itself; and nothing is more certain than that the king and his chiefs have always claimed this to have been the treaty.

“The simple unquestionable truth is that the negro interpreter, Abram, in order to secure his bribe, allowed Colonel Gadsden to insert the article touching the deputation, as it reads at this day in the treaty; but, knowing perfectly well the determination of the king and his chiefs to remain in Florida the twenty years secured to them in the treaty of Camp Moultrie, he dared not tell them the true character of the article, but misinterpreted it in such a manner as to leave the chiefs under the impression that they were to have the ultimate decision with regard to their acceptance or non-acceptance of the treaty. This is not only in harmony with their constant

declarations on the subject, persevered in against the strongest threats and inducements that could be held out to them to yield the point; but it is also in harmony with the natural claim of the king and his chiefs to hold in their own hands the power of disposing of their country. There is not the smallest probability that they would depute six of their tribe to supersede them in authority. We are obliged to suppose, therefore, that the interpreter mistranslated the nature of the article to the Indians, or—what is not to be imagined—that Colonel Gadsden himself falsified it. It is well enough to state this point clearly, because out of this came the longest and most expensive Indian war this country has ever known.

“It is remarkable that although this treaty was begun in 1832, and alleged to have become completed not very long afterwards, President Jackson did not send it to the Senate for confirmation until 1834, and no attempt was made to execute it until nearly a year after that, by which time the Indians had almost ceased to think of it. Why was this delay? Did President Jackson know, or suspect, that there was something wrong in the history of the treaty? All of the circumstances go to show that the President, in view of his determination to remove the Indians, and not thinking it probable that he could obtain any other treaty, decided not to be over-scrupulous in the matter, and at length sent the fraudulent treaty to the Senate; and as the Indians had no one to speak a word for them, the Senate, in a sort of matter-of-course way, ratified the treaty. In 1835, the treaty was sent to Gen. Wiley Thompson, the Indian Agent in Florida, with orders to announce to the Indians that in compliance with their treaty they must go to the West.

“The king and his chiefs were called together at Fort King, but the moment they heard from the agent the object of the council, they loudly and earnestly denied that there was such a treaty as he alleged. The point of disagreement was upon the article in the treaty touching the deputation; and when they were informed that the six men sent to the West had signed the paper offered to them by Major Phagan, their authority to do so was utterly repudiated. It appeared to the officers of the garrison that the chiefs were entirely in the right; and it appeared also that the king had been kept in



ignorance of what the deputation had done until it was disclosed by General Thompson. The Indians themselves, having been compelled to sign that paper in disobedience of the orders they had received, had maintained silence about it, never having informed the king of what they had done. At least this is the only rational solution of the matter.

"Councils were then held from time to time for several weeks while a correspondence was being carried on between General Thompson and the government, in which the President insisted upon the execution of the treaty; but on each occasion when it was presented to them they stoutly denied its validity, and on one occasion, while the treaty was lying open on the council table, Miccanopy, pointing to it, exclaimed, 'That is not the treaty: I never signed that treaty!'

" 'You lie, Miccanopy,' said the agent Thompson, 'Interpreter, tell him he lies, for there is his signature,'—putting his finger on his mark.

"But Miccanopy did not lie; for, although his mark was upon that paper, he meant only to deny that he had signed such a paper as was then interpreted to him.

"By this time these councils had become quite boisterous, and a young Indian in the council named Osceola,<sup>1</sup> who was

<sup>1</sup> Osceola, the famous master spirit and leader of his tribe, although never a chief, was born between 1800 and 1806, on the Tallapoosa River, in the Creek Nation. Catlin, who painted his very spirited full-length portrait, with rifle in hand and calico dress and trinkets exactly as he was dressed to be painted five days before his death in 1838, calls him "a most extraordinary man, and one entitled to a better fate." "In stature," Catlin adds, "he is about at mediocrity, with an elastic and graceful movement; in his face he is good-looking, with rather an effeminate smile, but of so peculiar a character that the world may be ransacked over without finding another just like it. In his manners and all his movements in company he is polite and gentlemanly, though all his conversation is entirely in his own tongue; and his general appearance and actions are those of a full-blood and wild Indian." His paternal grandfather, however, was a Scotchman, hence his (white) name, Powell. His mother was a Creek, of pure blood. Osceola was captured in 1837, by the treachery and falsehood of General Jesup, who violated his guaranty of safety when Osceola approached under a flag of truce, together with the king, Miccanopy, and 250 men, women, and children of his tribe. He was confined at Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, where he died of a broken heart, Jan. 30, 1838. The account of his last hours is striking, as given by his attendant surgeon, Dr. Weedon:—

"About half an hour before he died he seemed to be sensible that he was dying; and, although he could not speak, he signified by signs that he wished

called in English by the name of Powell, stood up in council, and with much gesticulation denounced the treaty and everything done about it. This General Thompson imprudently construed into a disrespect to himself, and, not regarding the freedom of debate which the Indians are even more tenacious about in council than the whites, he signified his wish to the commanding officer to have a section of the guard placed at his disposal, which soon appeared, and General Thompson ordered the guard to seize Osceola and put him into confinement, in irons. This was accordingly done, but not without some difficulty, for the young Indian became frantic with rage, and if he had had weapons about him, it would have been very dangerous to approach him; but he was overpowered and carried to prison in irons.<sup>1</sup>

“Upon this, General Thompson wrote desponding letters to the government, and it was uncertain for a time what was to be done or what could be done. Osceola, on his part, acted like a madman; he was perfectly furious when anybody came near him. After some days of frenzied violence he seemed to have formed his ultimate purpose and settled down into a per-

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me to send for the chiefs and for the officers of the post, whom I called in. He made signs to his wives (of whom he had two, and also two fine little children by his side) to go and bring his full dress which he wore in time of war; which having been brought in, he rose up in his bed, which was on the floor, and put on his shirt, his leggins, and moccasins, girded on his war-belt, his bullet-pouch and powder-horn, and laid his knife by the side of him on the floor. He then called for his red paint, and his looking-glass, which was held before him, when he deliberately painted one half of his face, his neck and his throat, his wrists, the backs of his hands, and the handle of his knife red with vermillion, a custom practised when the irrevocable oath of war and destruction is taken. His knife he then placed in its sheath under his belt, and he carefully arranged his turban on his head and his three ostrich plumes that he was in the habit of wearing in it. Being thus prepared in full dress, he laid down a few minutes to recover strength sufficient, when he rose up as before and with most benignant and pleasing smiles extended his hand to me and to all of the officers and chiefs that were around him, and shook hands with us all in dead silence, and also with his wives and his little children. He made a signal for them to lower him down upon his bed, which was done, and he then slowly drew from his war-belt his scalping-knife, which he firmly grasped in his right hand, laying it across the other on his breast, and in a moment smiled away his last breath, without a struggle or a groan.”

<sup>1</sup> As he went to the guard-house he exclaimed: “The sun,” pointing to its position, “is so high. I shall remember the hour. The agent has his day. I will have mine.”



fect calm. He sent word to General Thompson that he wished to see him, and General Thompson, having been informed of his quiet disposition, permitted an interview. In this interview Osceola became exceedingly submissive; acknowledged himself to be entirely in the wrong; apologized for what he had done, and asked General Thompson's forgiveness; declared that he was now willing to go to the West with his people, and, as he had been made a sub-chief over a small band, he told General Thompson that if he would release him and allow him to go among his people, he would bring them all in, and deliver them to the agent.

"General Thompson then addressed a letter to President Jackson direct, in which, with great exultation, he informed the President that all the difficulties were now overcome; that Osceola had gone out to bring in his people, and that the treaty would be executed. But nothing was further from Osceola's intentions than compliance with his promises. He had resorted to them only for the purpose of gaining his liberty, that he might employ it in seeking revenge upon General Thompson for the outrage put upon him by arresting him for 'words spoken in debate.'

"Osceola, being at large, armed himself, and lay in wait for an opportunity of taking the life of the man whom he regarded as the foe of his people. General Thompson had been in the habit of walking between the agency house and the fort, which were separated from each other a few hundred yards, with clumps of bushes here and there along the road, affording places of concealment. An opportunity did not offer itself for the execution of Osceola's purpose for some days, and he thought it necessary to give General Thompson some evidence of his fidelity, to throw him, or keep him, off his guard. With this object he gathered up a few of the women and children of his band, and exhibiting these he told General Thompson that his people had become so much scattered that he had not been able to find them, but that he would do so as soon as possible. General Thompson had no suspicion of his purpose, and allowed him to go out again; and, as he did not care to detain the women and children, they were allowed to go also.

"A few days after this, on the 28th of December, 1835,

Osceola, with some of his band, concealed by bushes near the road leading from the fort to the agency house, saw General Thompson approach, accompanied by a lieutenant, Constantine Smith, and the Indians, securing their aim, at a signal fired, killing both the agent and his companion. Osceola immediately fled and took command of the Indians in the field.<sup>1</sup>

"This tragedy happened on the very day on which the main body of the Indians under Miccanopy waylaid Major Dade, who was marching up from Tampa Bay to Fort King, with two companies of infantry and a piece of artillery. When within about thirty-five miles of Fort King this body of troops was ambushed, and the whole party destroyed except three who escaped from the massacre and got back to Tampa Bay.

"The Indians had taken the alarm from the disclosures made in the councils at Fort King, and had banded together resolved to resist any attempt at a movement of troops in their country for their expulsion from it. Many of them knew the officers at Tampa Bay, and had sent them a friendly warning not to attempt to go to Fort King. They sent word that they were opposed to going to war, but that they did not intend to be driven out of their country. The two companies nevertheless left Tampa Bay under orders for Fort King: but they never reached their destination.

"Who shall now say what was the commencement of the Florida War? Was it begun by Colonel Gadsden? by the runaway negro from Pensacola? by Major Phagan? or by his Excellency the President of the United States? For certainly it did not begin with the massacre of Dade's party, much less with the sacrifice of General Thompson."

<sup>1</sup> When he thus took command, Osceola sent out a runner to all the chiefs directing that no white woman or child should be harmed, "for this fight is between men."



## CHAPTER XIII

IN FLORIDA WITH GENERAL GAINES. THE DADE BATTLE FIELD.  
DETAILS OF AMBUSH. IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF  
DEAD—EIGHT OFFICERS AND NINETY-EIGHT MEN. OF-  
FICIAL REPORT

THE Seminoles had indeed risen in defence of their homes and families, but not less had it become the duty—at least constructively and officially—of every soldier to join the army going to the front to “suppress the insurrection.” General Gaines and his staff moved to Pensacola on Jan. 20, 1836, returned to Mobile on the 26th, proceeded to New Orleans three days afterwards for troops, and, having assembled 1100 men, started them on steamboats to Tampa. They arrived there a week later. The little army was under the immediate command of Col. Persifer F. Smith, with Captain Hitchcock as Acting Inspector-General.

Awaiting the arrival of reinforcements at Tampa was a private soldier named Clark, one of the men who had escaped from Major F. L. Dade’s ill-fated command on Dec. 28th, and he narrated the circumstances to General Gaines and his officers. Major Dade, it seemed, had left Tampa with a detachment to reinforce Fort King, some seventy-five miles to the northeast. Dade was a brave but cautious soldier, and, though seeing no hostiles and few signs of any, conducted his march with due care and precaution until he had crossed the Withlacoochee and reached his last camp, within thirty-five miles of his destination. He then addressed the “boys,” assuring them that they had passed all danger and would soon be at Fort King. The morning of Dec. 28th was cold and uncomfortable, and Major Dade, supposing all peril passed, allowed his men to start on the march without throwing out

flankers or skirmishers and with their overcoats buttoned outside of their belts and cartridge-boxes. The command moved confidently on their way with an advance guard of barely six men, closely followed by Major Dade and Capt. Fraser, the men moving in double file behind them with one six-pounder. They were moving loosely, the head of the column being a hundred yards in rear of the advance guard. A heavy growth of low palmetto furnished a perfect ambuscade, and when the company reached a point where an attack would be most destructive the Indians gave a yell and poured in a sheet of fire.

Dade, Fraser, and the advance guard all fell in a cluster, close together. After this first fire the survivors took to the trees, getting such shelter as they could. After three or four hours' fighting, the Indians withdrew, suspending their fire for several hours. Out of the 112 officers and men composing Dade's command, only thirty-five were found to be living. These were mostly wounded, several mortally, and some many times, but they immediately adopted such measures of defence as remained possible. They cut down small pine trees and, laying them on each other like a rail fence, built a triangular pen. It was an open and most feeble structure, scarcely affording any shelter at all. As soon as the Indians had disposed of their wounded and obtained more ammunition they returned to their bloody work, and paused no more till the firing of the troops had altogether ceased.

When the soldiers were all disabled or out of ammunition, the Seminoles sent into the pen a body of their armed negro slaves, who put to death every man showing any signs of life. Among these wounded was Clark, who had received no less than seven wounds, covering him with blood and disfiguring him for life. With extraordinary presence of mind and self-control he affected death. A negro gave him a push with his foot and, saying in good English "He's dead enough," left him alive. The wounded man lay perfectly still among the dead till darkness set in, when he crawled out of the bloody pen and started for Tampa. The Indians had taken their guns and ammunition, so that he was unarmed. He shortly fell in with another of his companions and they hurried forward together. Finding that they were followed they divided,



and when Clark had hidden in a palmetto swamp he heard the crack of the Indian's rifle that told of the death of his companion. Clark evaded his cunning pursuers and ultimately reached Tampa Bay, barely alive, feeble to the last degree with lack of food and loss of blood.

As soon as the news of the massacre was received in Washington, Gen. Winfield Scott was assigned to conduct an expedition against the Seminoles, and immediately gave the necessary orders for assembling troops to penetrate the country by way of St. John's River on the north, making his first head-quarters at Piccolata.

Unfortunately for harmonious co-operation, the division between the departments under command of General Scott and General Gaines respectively was an imaginary line running from the southern extremity of Florida to the western end of Lake Superior. Tampa Bay was within the jurisdiction of General Gaines, and he at once took measures for its protection. But the government had chosen General Scott to conduct the war against the Seminoles, and the larger portion of the field of operations lay within his department. As soon as he heard of General Gaines's preparations, he sent him an order to desist from any movement. General Gaines was much annoyed at this, and arranged to return at once to New Orleans, meantime counselling with his staff.

Captain Hitchcock says in his diary that he "took the liberty of advising General Gaines that he could not in fairness abandon the volunteers who had been enlisted at his request; that, if he left the command, the troops would be disorganized, as there was no other officer of rank known to them of sufficient influence to hold them effectually together; and that General Scott must naturally desire to have a body of troops at Tampa Bay, south of the hostile Indians near Fort King, whom he could attack in his own way from the north. These considerations prevailed with General Gaines."

Shortly after arriving at Tampa Bay, General Gaines ordered a movement of the troops for the next morning. Captain Hitchcock "felt convinced that the movement would be injudicious, knowing that General Gaines intended to go towards Fort King." Being considerably troubled about it, he found an early opportunity to urge General Gaines not to go towards

Fort King, setting forth that General Scott would prefer to have this force at Tampa Bay or east of it to intercept the Indians in their retreat; and dwelt especially on the probability that General Scott would find it extremely difficult to furnish supplies for his own force, without having General Gaines away from his own base and depending on him also. This advice to General Gaines was repeated several times most earnestly, and to it was added the suggestion that General Gaines and General Scott might pass each other in the wilderness if they should happen to take different paths. The counsel of Captain Hitchcock had some effect, and General Gaines next morning reluctantly turned his march eastward toward the center of Florida instead of up the coast. But on the third morning he resumed his former purpose and wheeled the column northward, striking the road to Fort King. The march was flanked and menaced by hostile Indians who burnt the woods ahead of the column, which, in turn, burnt the Indian villages along the line. Captain Hitchcock and Lieutenant Izard on Colonel Twiggs's staff kept ahead of the advance guard in an exposed position, till General Gaines, thinking that they lacked that discretion which is said to be the better part of valor, ordered them to join their commands. The two branches of the Withlacoochee were crossed, and about seven weeks after the Dade massacre the expedition of General Gaines arrived at the site of that tragedy. Captain Hitchcock wrote the official account of this reconnaissance of the battle-ground which is found in the War archives as follows:

“WESTERN DEPARTMENT,  
“FORT KING, FLORIDA, February 22, 1836.

“GENERAL:—Agreeably to your directions, I observed the battle ground six or seven miles north of the Withlacoochee River, where Major Dade and his command were destroyed by the Seminole Indians on the 28th of December last, and have the honor to submit the following report:

“The force under your command which arrived at this post to-day from Tampa Bay encamped on the night of the 19th inst. on the ground occupied by Major Dade on the night of the 27th of December. He and his party were destroyed on the morning of the 28th of December, about four miles in



advance of that position. He was advancing towards this post, and was attacked from the north, so that on the 20th inst. we came upon the rear of his battle-ground about nine o'clock in the morning. Our advanced guard had passed the ground without halting, when the General and his staff came upon one of the most appalling scenes that can be imagined. We first saw some broken and scattered boxes; then a cart, the two oxen of which were lying dead, as if they had fallen asleep, their yokes still on them; a little to the right, one or two horses were seen. We then came to a small enclosure, made by felling trees in such a manner as to form a triangular breastwork for defence. Within the triangle, along the north and west faces of it, were about thirty bodies, mostly mere skeletons, although much of the clothing was left upon them. These were lying, almost every one of them, in precisely the position they must have occupied during the fight—their heads next to the logs over which they had delivered their fire, and their bodies stretched with striking regularity parallel to each other. They had evidently been shot dead at their posts, and the Indians had not disturbed them, except by taking the scalps of most of them. Passing this little breastwork we found other bodies along the road, and by the side of the road, generally behind trees which had been resorted to for covers from the enemy's fire. Advancing about 200 yards further we found a cluster of bodies in the middle of the road. These were evidently the advanced guard, in the rear of which was the body of Major Dade, and to the right, that of Captain Fraser.

"These were all doubtless shot down on the first fire of the Indians, except, perhaps, Captain Fraser, who must, however, have fallen very early in the fight. Those in the road and by the trees fell during the first attack. It was during a cessation of the fire that the little band still remaining, about thirty in number, threw up the triangular breastwork, which, from the haste with which it was constructed, was necessarily defective, and could not protect the men in the second attack.

"We had with us many of the personal friends of the officers of Major Dade's command, and it is gratifying to be able to state that every officer was identified by undoubted

evidence. They were buried, and the cannon, a six-pounder, that the Indians had thrown into a swamp, was recovered and placed vertically at the head of the grave, where it is to be hoped it will long remain. The bodies of the non-commissioned officers and privates were buried in two graves, and it was found that every man was accounted for. The command was composed of eight officers and one hundred and two non-commissioned officers and privates. The bodies of eight officers and ninety-eight men were interred, four men having escaped; three of whom reached Tampa Bay: the fourth was killed the day after the battle.

"It may be proper to observe, that the attack was not made from a hammock, but in a thinly wooded country: the Indians being concealed by palmetto and grass, which has since been burned.

"The two companies were Captain Fraser's, of the Third Artillery, and Captain Gardiner's, of the Second Artillery. The officers were Major Dade, of the Fourth Infantry, Captains Fraser and Gardiner, Second Lieutenant Bassinger, brevet Second Lieutenants R. Henderson, Mudge, and Keais, of the artillery, and Dr. J. S. Gatlin.

"I have the honor to be, with the highest respect, your obedient servant,

(Signed) "E. A. HITCHCOCK,  
"Captain 1st Infantry, Act. Insp'r General.

"MAJOR GEN. EDMUND P. GAINES,  
"Commanding Western Department,  
"Fort King, Florida."

Captain Hitchcock further says in his diary:

"A proof that the Indians had done this deed reluctantly is the fact that very little of the clothing of the men had been removed and few had been scalped—these, probably, by the negroes, as Clark recalled their movements. The wolf had not made them his prey: the vulture only had visited them. We buried them all, and, at my suggestion, the cannon, a six-pounder, was placed over the graves. The officers' features could not be discerned, but they were identified by various articles found upon them, which, strange to say, the Indians had left. A breastpin was found on Lieutenant Fraser, a finger



ring on Lieutenant Mudge, a pistol upon Lieutenant Keais, a stock on Doctor Gatlin, a map on Captain Gardiner, and a net shirt on Lieutenant Bassinger. Major Dade and Lieutenant Henderson were known by their teeth. The divisions of our little column were allowed to move up in succession and view the melancholy scene."

## CHAPTER XIV

ARRIVAL OF GENERAL SCOTT. JEALOUSY OF GENERALS. GAINES'S  
DISOBEDIENCE AND FRIGID RECEPTION. DEPARTURE FOR  
THE TEXAN FRONTIER

THE arrival of General Gaines at Fort King was a surprise, as the small garrison was expecting relief only from the north. Now at once began the trouble about provisions. There was nothing to spare at Fort King, and very little at Fort Drane, a small post twenty miles northwest. General Scott had arrived at Piccolata, nearly 100 miles north on the St. John's, and was greatly astonished and somewhat irritated when he heard of the arrival at Fort King of General Gaines, whom he had directed not to advance.

General Gaines was now in a serious difficulty. Being unprovisioned, he could not stay there, and therefore, obtaining from Fort Drane a few days' supplies of rations, he started back towards Tampa Bay. Making a detour to the west on the second day out he was attacked by Indians at Wahoo swamp on the Withlacoochee and there the gallant and promising young Izard was killed. The Indians quite surrounded the camp, and in the next day or two killed several men and wounded more than thirty. Among the latter General Gaines was included, the bullet passing through his lower lip and tearing away two of his teeth. "The first words he spoke, after catching the teeth in his hand," says Captain Hitchcock, "were, 'It is mean of the redskins to knock out my teeth when I have so few!' " The Indians soon withdrew.

"Nothing of importance occurred within the next three or four days," says the diary, "when, in the evening, the camp was hailed from the south side of the river, and the Indians, through Abram and other negroes who spoke English,



expressed a wish to have a talk with General Gaines. They were told to come next day. At ten o'clock in the morning some half a dozen of them approached the camp from its rear, unarmed and under a white flag, and I was directed by General Gaines to meet them. I took an orderly and went to the interview. Among the visitors I found Osceola, 'Alligator,' and a chief called Jumper who did the talking for the Indians. He said the Indians did not want fighting; they wanted peace; enough men had been killed. If white men came to plant, they said, they wished to know it; but they wanted the troops to go away. I tried to persuade them to go into the camp and talk with the General, but they declined. He must come out and meet them on neutral ground, they said. When I asked them to come the next day, they expressed a wish to make peace at once, and not put it off, a smart negro suggesting that we might have armed friends coming, and they too might have friends out, and these would fire on each other, and 'there have been enough killed' they kept repeating. I reported to the General, who told me to state explicitly the large force coming and the certainty of their being crushed if they persisted.

"I went out and made a long talk, enlarging on the merits of General Gaines, his willingness to do them justice, the bleeding of his heart for their sufferings, etc., telling them that 5000 soldiers were coming, some from one place, some from another, with supplies of all kinds that had been massing on the borders of their country for two months, and that any Indian found with a rifle in his hand would be shot. I then soothed them a little by adding, what, indeed, I believed, that no doubt they thought they had suffered great wrong, but that, if so, they had had satisfaction. Osceola spoke up and said, 'I am satisfied,' and this was all he said in the council. The fact is, they *have* been abused. They listened very attentively to my talk, and their appearance indicated their entire sincerity.

"They said they would go and hold counsel and return in the afternoon. At about 4 P.M. they came in the same order to the same place. I met them. They spoke much of the loss of men killed; said blood enough had been shed, and they wished to put a stop to it. They added that they wished to

consult their head chief, Miccanopy, who was absent at a distance. They asked for a cessation of the war.

"I told them that General Gaines had no authority to talk with them, but that another officer was coming from the President, with authority to treat, and he would see them if they would go on the other side of the river and remain perfectly quiet till sent for. They promised to do so."

Meantime provisions were exhausted at Camp Izard. General Gaines sent back a letter to General Scott, supposed to have arrived at Fort Drane by this time, suggesting that if he would forward some rations and then march himself across the river above the swamp, they could between them destroy the whole tribe. Scott was still at Piccolata, and, being incensed at Gaines's disobedience of orders, sent an order to Colonel Clinch at Fort Drane, not to send any supplies to General Gaines. Colonel Clinch at once disobeyed this order, and took the liberty of driving forty head of cattle down to the Wahoo swamp, where General Gaines was still waiting for General Scott at "Camp Izard" as he named it, and his half-starved men were eating up the last of their horses. Some had eaten nothing for two or three days.<sup>1</sup> The relief was timely, and General Scott's order had evidently been sent on insufficient information. With Colonel Clinch came Colonel Gadsden, the author of the treaty which the Seminoles were contesting.

The question was where to go next. "The truth is," says Captain Hitchcock in his diary, "that the whole difficulty resulted from General Gaines having made an injudicious movement and placed himself and his command out of position." A council of the principal officers was held, at which it was decided to march back to Fort Drane, and the movement was made the next day.

Soon after reaching Fort Drane, on March 11th, General Scott made his appearance from the north. "The meeting between the two generals was cold in the extreme," Captain Hitchcock records. "No civilities or courtesies passed between them. They sat opposite to each other at table without any salutations on either side. The aids, however, conversed with each other. I called on the 13th and had some conversa-

<sup>1</sup> Hitchcock's diary: "I tasted a piece of horse liver and found it very good."



tion with General Scott. He exhibited much anxiety about the 'difficulties' he had to contend with, enumerated a great many, putting on a bold face, however, by saying that he was the man who was able to defend himself at all times and places, 'with any weapon from a goose-quill up.' He said his supplies had been consumed by the army of General Gaines.

"Left Fort Drane with General Gaines on March 14 and rode 150 miles through the woods on horseback six days to Tallahassee. The people turned out *en masse* to receive the General. They had heard that General Scott had refused him supplies and were very indignant. The General declined a public dinner, and next day he and I took stage for the West. Paused at Pensacola and Mobile. Highly exaggerated accounts of our suffering had arrived, and my brother's family were almost prepared to hear of our deaths by massacre or starvation. The General declined public dinners and honors at Mobile and New Orleans and took me with him to the Mexican frontier—Natchitoches."<sup>1</sup>

This was some 200 miles northwest of New Orleans and twenty miles from the Texan frontier.

The close of the campaign is thus described by Captain Hitchcock:

"During the time in which General Scott was preparing for a movement from Fort Drane against the Indians the Indians never fired a rifle; affording some evidence that, whatever expectations they might have formed as to the result of a council, they must have expected an invitation from General Scott to meet him in a talk. But General Scott appears to have had the idea that no good could result from a conference with them, and he would not send for them. When ready for his movement he set out on the road which led to the Camp of General Gaines. But his rear had hardly left the vicinity of Fort Drane when the Indians attacked it and cut off three of his baggage wagons; and from that time they manifested

<sup>1</sup> As evincing Captain Hitchcock's mental tendencies at this time, the following is copied from his ever-present diary: "Met an old friend living in poverty near Baton Rouge. She expressed thankfulness to Providence for the blessings she had enjoyed. I wondered what they were. Her husband first spent her property, then became a drunkard and died, leaving her in a strange country nearly 2000 miles from all her friends, where for ten years she had struggled for daily dread for herself and her children."



their hostile disposition to the utmost extent of their power. General Scott marched through the country to Tampa Bay and returned thence over the Fort King road without in reality accomplishing any beneficial result toward bringing the war to an end; and the two Generals, Scott and Gaines, were brought together at the town of Frederick in Maryland by order of the President, where their campaigns underwent the searching investigation of a court of inquiry, but without producing any sensible effect upon public opinion."

## CHAPTER XV

INDEPENDENCE OF TEXAS. "FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS."  
MASSACRES OF THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD. ALARMS ON THE  
SABINE. VICTORY OF SAN JACINTO. "LET THE PEOPLE  
PLANT CORN!"

**I**N camp near Natchitoches in Louisiana, April 12, 1836, Captain Hitchcock's diary contains these preliminary entries:

"Alarms are started in every direction for the obvious purpose of inducing or compelling General Gaines to march into Texas. I have repeatedly told him they are mostly unfounded and have traced many of them to their source. . . . General Gaines thinks, as most of us do, that the country of Texas ought to be purchased from Mexico by the United States."

The events which followed are so interesting and important that the narrative of his experiences can best be given in Captain Hitchcock's own words six months later:

"When General Gaines was superseded by General Scott and retired from Florida I went with him as Inspector-General to the Sabine frontier. Texas had recently declared her independence of Mexico, and it was reported that Santa Anna, the President of Mexico, was approaching Texas with an army of 30,000 men, to reduce that revolted state to submission. The President of the United States thought it proper to have an officer of rank near the border to preserve neutrality and protect the rights of our own people, and he had selected General Gaines for that purpose.

"There had been a time when the Spaniards had considerable settlements in Texas, particularly at San Antonio in the western part, and they had even established some villages on both sides of the Sabine, a few miles from the river. But

after the separation of Mexico from Spain (in 1824), these frontier settlements, being much exposed to depredations from Indians, became almost depopulated, and the remaining inhabitants partially amalgamated with the Indians. The southern part of the state was almost entirely without population—an immense wilderness.

“At this juncture Stephen F. Austin, of Connecticut, went to the city of Mexico and obtained from the government a patent for a large tract of land in Texas, with the privilege of inviting emigrants from the United States,—a vital condition, however, being the permanent adherence of Texas to the Republic of Mexico. Colonel Austin’s efforts to establish a colony in Texas were soon crowned with success. Towns sprang up in many places, farmers came in and settled, the land was cultivated and the population rapidly increased. The government of the state was of course according to the constitution of Mexico. Everything appeared to be progressing favorably; but in other parts of Mexico dissensions had grown up, mostly on account of the pronunciamiento of Santa Anna declaring that in future the governors of the states should be appointed by the President and should no longer be elected by the people themselves.

“This was most decidedly an unconstitutional and revolutionary act of an extreme character. As might be expected, three or four of the states publicly pronounced against it, and among them the state of Texas. The people of Texas in convention assembled denied the authority of Santa Anna to abrogate the constitution of the republic and declared themselves free from all the obligations accepted by Colonel Austin connecting them with the Republic of Mexico, on account of the remarkable act of its executive officer. The state of Zacatecas also declared her independence.

“Santa Anna raised an army of some 20,000 men and advanced towards the north; and after the reduction of Zacatecas, which, it was said, was effected by money and not by force of arms, he continued his march northward. Entering Texas he invested a dismantled fort near San Antonio called the Alamo. There were in the Alamo less than 140 Americans, including the celebrated David Crockett, the bear-hunter, and an ex-member of Congress, and also the celebrated Bowie,



said to be the inventor of the knife which bears his name. This small body of Americans held Santa Anna's army at bay for several weeks, suffering slight loss while inflicting a loss it is said of 1600. At last, when starvation had become an ally of the Mexican, the Alamo was stormed and its occupants were all put to death, including six men who had formally surrendered.

"Near the coast a body of some 500 men had been organized to 'resist the invader', under Colonel Fannin, who had marched most of them from Mobile and took position at Goliad, just before Santa Anna crossed the Rio Grande. Here they found themselves entirely out of position, beyond the possibility of receiving support. During the siege of the Alamo, Colonel Fannin attempted to leave Goliad and join the forces in the east, but found himself surrounded on a prairie by a large body of Mexican cavalry. He selected a position in the open country, but soon found it untenable. When satisfied that he could not possibly maintain himself longer, a truce was had, followed by a conference with the enemy, and the Mexican general signed an agreement by which he undertook to send Fannin's party of 500 men out of the country by sea to Mobile, on condition of surrender. Fannin delivered up his command.

"The Mexican commander, upon reporting his success to Santa Anna, received an order to shoot the whole party as rebels. This order he expressly declined to obey, urging his obligations in point of honor under his agreement with Fannin. Santa Anna then superseded him and his successor executed the order the morning after his arrival at Goliad, marching all the prisoners out in file to a place selected for their execution. Two or three near the rear of the party, suspecting danger, broke and ran for their lives, followed by a dozen or twenty others. All of these were recaptured and shot excepting three who succeeded in reaching the 'timber.' One of these, named Murphy, finally made his way to the army of General Houston.

"By this time a good many people were crossing the Sabine into Texas, moved by the same sympathetic impulse that had caused the presence of Fannin's men in the far-off town of Goliad. From the Southern States especially they were moving westward, individually and in small parties, and making their

way to Texas, armed and equipped for war, though very few of them knew upon what principle the war could be defended. John Quincy Adams in the House of Representatives took occasion to refer to this in a speech opposing the war, describing a solitary individual making his way with long strides through Kentucky with rifle on his shoulder and bullets in his belt, who, in reply to the question where he was going, answered, 'To Texas.' To the further question 'What for?' he answered defiantly, 'To fight for my rights!' Under this vague notion of fighting for their rights, the Texans were being continuously but not very numerous re-inforced.

"After committing the atrocities I have detailed, Santa Anna moved a large body of his cavalry towards the Brazos River to find the enemy. Passing to a point lower down the river than that occupied by the Texans, he crossed with the intention of passing to the rear of Houston. The latter, however, had watched his movements carefully by means of expert lookouts, and when Santa Anna was fairly over the river, Houston broke up his position on the Brazos and, without being discovered, succeeded in getting immediately in the rear of Santa Anna. The fugitive Murphy had arrived in camp and fired the hearts of the Texans by detailing the horrible massacre of Fannin, and they had also received news of the slaughter of the Alamo. At daybreak next morning Houston was within striking distance of the Mexican President and at once his people—hardly to be called an army—fell upon Santa Anna's force with the cry, 'Remember the Alamo and the Goliad!' Santa Anna was taken entirely by surprise, his men being at their morning coffee. The victory was complete. Some 600 of the enemy were killed and some 600 or 700 taken prisoners, including the Mexican President. This was the only serious battle fought for the independence of Texas.

"General Gaines had arrived on the Sabine River with a single regiment of United States infantry, a few weeks prior to these events. He knew of the position of General Houston on the Brazos, and of the advance of Santa Anna into Texas with his powerful army; but beyond these facts he knew next to nothing of the state of affairs beyond his immediate



front. My official duties required me to take note of our environments.

“Apparently every male inhabitant of Texas capable of bearing arms had joined Houston, leaving homes unprotected and defenceless. In this state of things some scoundrels raised the cry of ‘Indian massacre,’ and it spread along the Sabine and through the adjoining country. The alarm was supported by plausibility also, for there were many Indians at that time in the neighborhood and they had injuries to resent which might induce them to avenge themselves upon helpless people. This drove across the Sabine great numbers of women and children, who fell under the protection of General Gaines. Their temporary camps, made of sheets and bed-quilts spread from tree to tree, extended up and down the river some twenty miles or more, presenting a very picturesque but extremely painful spectacle.

“Most of the fugitives seemed to be remarkably cheerful. One day as General Gaines, surrounded by his staff, passed through one of these camps, a tall, muscular woman standing upon a log swung her arm as we went by and shouted, ‘What a fine chance for a camp-meeting if we only had a preacher!’ Many of their deserted homes had been pillaged. The unfounded alarm had been started for one of three purposes—perhaps for all: speculators wished to purchase property at a reduced price; vagabonds wished to plunder abandoned habitations; and a band of political intriguers wished to make an occasion for General Gaines to march into Texas.

“I felt misplaced upon the Sabine. I regarded the whole of our proceedings in the Southwest as being wicked, so far as the United States were concerned. Our own people provoked the war with Mexico and prosecuted it, not for ‘liberty’ but for land, and I felt averse to being made an instrument for such purposes.

“As the General was unable to obtain any satisfactory information, he determined to open communication with both Santa Anna and Houston under a white flag, and I received orders to bear it with a mounted party of forty men. He had not then heard of any battle, and the letter addressed to both of the warriors was a simple caution that in case they should approach the border of the United States it was expected



of them that they would carefully respect its neutrality. I was highly pleased with this mission, and made my preparations to start on a certain morning early in May. Everything was got ready, when, the evening before I was to set out, a common-looking countryman came in from the west and presented himself to General Gaines. He handed to him two small letters purporting to have been written, one by General Houston with a pencil, the other in ink by Mr. Rust, the Texan Secretary of War. The writing from General Houston was on a little slip of paper not much larger than my hand, and was not addressed to anybody in particular. It merely announced his complete victory over Santa Anna, and concluded with the words ‘Let the people plant corn. SAM HOUSTON.’ ”

## CHAPTER XVI

TO WASHINGTON WITH HOUSTON'S LETTER. UPRISING IN THE CREEK COUNTRY. PERILS OF THE ALLIGATOR ROUTE. THE LAST COACH THROUGH. THREE WEEKS AHEAD OF THE MAIL. HOW GENERAL JACKSON GOT THE NEWS

THE news of the great battle and victory and the capture of Santa Anna caused the wildest excitement at the camp near Natchitoches, and General Gaines resolved to forward it to Washington by the most rapid conveyance at hand. The diarist thus tells the story of how Jackson got the news:

“General Gaines claimed to know perfectly well the handwriting of Houston and declared that the note was genuine. The memorandum from Secretary Rust was a little more formal in its statement and was written in a fair hand with which none of us were acquainted. The General was satisfied of the correctness of the news, and immediately decided to change my mission, directing me to proceed immediately to Washington city with the two notes and place them in the hands of President Jackson.

“I set off at once, leaving Camp Sabine May 10, 1836, directly after breakfast. I found that the ordinary mail route through upper Georgia was interrupted on account of the Creek Indians having broken out into hostilities; and although the capture of a mail coach and the murder of its passengers, which had just occurred, was disavowed by the chiefs, the outrage put a temporary stop to travel through the Creek country. Accordingly, on arriving at Mobile, I, with other passengers, selected instead the southern, or what was called the ‘Alligator Route,’ and took a steamer for Pensacola to that end. This route crossed the Appalachicola River at the

confluence of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers, and thence trended eastward, leaving the hostile Indians to the north and west of us.

"On arriving at Pensacola, however, the whole town was found in great commotion because a messenger had just reached there from the town of Helena upon the Alligator Route, and reported that the Indians were coming down the country murdering and burning and leaving devastation in their path. He had been sent to ask for assistance. This caused a great excitement among the passengers, most of whom immediately resolved to return to New Orleans. I asked to see the messenger and he was brought to me. It was obvious that he was greatly scared and excited, but he seemed to have no fact of importance to base his alarming conclusions on. Among the passengers was a Scotchman named Anderson, whom I found to be a very clever fellow and a most intelligent and agreeable companion. He came to me after I had questioned the messenger and asked me what I meant to do. I told him that it was impossible to know from the statements of the messenger whether there was any danger or not, but that I should continue until the mail should be stopped.

" 'Well,' said he, 'If you go, I shall go with you.'

"I told him that I had important dispatches for the government, and that it was a point of duty to go on with them, and I advised him to determine his course without any reference to me. He repeated that if I decided to continue on the journey he should go with me. I was glad to have his company.

"All the other passengers left the boat and the steamer got under way northward, Mr. Anderson and myself sole passengers. We had a delightful passage across Pensacola Sound, with the pleasantest possible weather, and landed late in the evening where we found a post-coach ready to receive us. We started in the coach about ten o'clock at night. The sky was clear and the stars bright, and Mr. Anderson took a seat with the coachman, where he amused himself singing songs until I fell asleep within the coach. About midnight the coach stopped suddenly, which awakened me and I called out asking what was the matter.



“ ‘A light ahead,’ answered Mr. Anderson, ‘and we don’t know what it means.’ ”

“ The coachman declared there was no one living on the road there. I answered that I did not think one small twinkle in the distance amounted to much at any rate, and told the driver to drive ahead and find out what it was. We soon found it was a family fleeing from the country on account of the Indian uprising. The head of the family could give us no further information and we continued on our journey.

“ Next day before noon we reached the town of Helena, where the people were greatly alarmed and busily engaged ‘forting-in’ as it was called. They had cut logs twenty feet long and were setting them up in a stockade around the town, leaving loopholes to fire through. This makes a pretty good sort of defence against Indians, whose mode of warfare rarely induces them to make an attack on a place having the least appearance of an artificial defence. Instances have been known where half a dozen men, protected by a little earth thrown up in a few minutes in the night, have held at bay a hundred Indians all day and then escaped. Indians, in fact, are very timid warriors where there is any necessity of exposing themselves.

“ We could get no positive information at Helena, but the inhabitants were evidently badly frightened. Ten miles farther on we stopped for a change of horses, but the new driver stood sullenly with his hands in his pockets refusing to go ahead. He declared that the Indians were in possession of the road between us and the Appalachicola, and that if we attempted to proceed, we should be cut off and all scalped, adding that he did not mean to expose his life for twenty dollars a month. Anderson and I fell upon him with words and finally shamed him into doing his duty, and he mounted the box and drove on. An immense swamp covered the last mile of our journey, before reaching the river, and the driver insisted that this swamp would be filled with Indians. I had with me a pair of pistols and a sword, and, giving Mr. Anderson one of the pistols, we drove into the swamp, though it has often occurred to me that pistols would not be likely to afford much protection in such a case as the driver apprehended. Until this moment Mr. Anderson’s cheerfulness and good hu-

mor had not the least abated throughout the journey, which he had frequently enlivened with songs, having an excellent voice and a good deal of taste in music. He also exulted over his friends who had turned back to New Orleans and laughed heartily in anticipation of beating them to New York. But as we entered the swamp we both became silent, for a sense of our utter helplessness in case of an attack could hardly fail to impress us alike. Darkness had also fallen, which increased the seriousness of the situation. At length, however, we reached the right bank of the river without having been saluted with an Indian yell.

“We were obliged to call loudly for the ferryman, but he at length came from the other side of the river and conveyed us across; and now Mr. Anderson broke into most joyous expressions on account of having safely passed all danger. But Mr. Boniface stepped up saying, ‘Don’t be in a hurry, sir; you have the greatest danger of all yet before you.’ And he proceeded to describe a place on the road farther north where it was crossed by the great Indian trail over which hostiles were continually passing making their way from the Creek nation down into Florida. This was by no means cheerful intelligence to any of us, but, not to dwell longer upon unrealized perils, we safely continued our journey over the dangerous trail, and, after five days and nights of constant travel in a post-coach, we reached Augusta, and thence easily made our way north.

“That was the last coach that came through. I reached Washington city<sup>1</sup> three weeks in advance of the mail, my trip by the Alligator Route being the last that was made until the Indian disturbances were at an end.

“The hour I reached the capital I presented myself at the White House and sent my card to President Jackson, announcing myself as bringing dispatches from General Gaines. I had already discovered that there was intense anxiety among

<sup>1</sup> Captain Hitchcock was three weeks in making this journey from the Texas frontier to Washington with the news for President Jackson, but orders issued by the War Department to General Jackson, on July 14, 1814, to capture Pensacola, were six months in reaching him, arriving four months after he had captured the town and three months after the order to capture it had been countermanded!



the people everywhere to hear from the Southwest, and was not surprised at being instantly admitted. I was warmly greeted by the President, and delivered to him the two notes from Houston and Rust, with a brief note from General Gaines. The note from General Houston read thus:

“ ‘SAN JACINTO, 26th April, 1836.

“ ‘Tell our friends all the news. That we have beat the enemy, killed 630 and taken 570 prisoners. Generals Santa Anna and Cos are taken, and three generals slain—vast amount of property taken and about 1500 stand of arms, many swords and one 9-pound brass cannon. Tell them to come on and let the people plant corn.

“ ‘SAMUEL HOUSTON,  
“ ‘*Commander-in-Chief.*’

“ ‘I am not sure that I ever saw a man more delighted than President Jackson appeared to be at the reception of these notes. If there had been a vacancy in the dragoons at that time I think he would have given it to me on the spot. He read both the notes over and over, but dwelt particularly upon that from Houston, exclaiming as if talking to himself: ‘Yes! that’s his writing! I know it well!’<sup>1</sup> That’s his writing! That’s Sam Houston’s writing! There can be no doubt of the truth of what he states!’ Then he ordered a map, got down over it, and looked in vain for the unknown rivulet called San Jacinto. He passed his finger excitedly over the map in search of the name, saying: ‘It must be there! No, it must be over there!’ moving his finger around but finally giving up the search.

“ ‘The President expressed himself openly in favor of Texas and insisted in fact that the river Nueces was our boundary,<sup>2</sup> scouting the idea of any reference to Melish’s map (as if those

<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly he knew it well. Houston, like David Crockett, killed at the Alamo, was from Tennessee, and both had been members of Congress from that State, and both had fought under Jackson in his war against the Creeks.

<sup>2</sup> Although our treaty with Mexico, Jan. 12, 1828, explicitly fixed the Sabine River as the permanent boundary between the two countries, and this has never been modified.



who made the treaty knew nothing about it), and insisted on the principle that no treaty could yield any portion of our territory. This last may be correct, but the former is no reason at all. I called a second time to see the President to speak with him concerning the Florida campaign, but found him surrounded by politicians and gave it up.

“The news I had brought quite electrified the country, being immediately published far and wide.

“I heard it said before I left Washington that the acquisition of Texas by the United States was a darling object with certain politicians of the South, and that Jackson himself had originally advised Houston to emigrate to Texas having in view a possible rupture with Mexico and the final annexation of Texas to the United States.

“My connection with General Gaines had been a temporary one, and I was not expected to return to him. I may add here that the General, on hearing of the capture of Santa Anna, addressed a letter to Houston, urging, in the strongest terms, that no violence should be done to him because of the massacre of the Alamo. He also addressed a civil letter to Santa Anna himself. The Texan chiefs soon discovered how they could make a better use of Santa Anna than by putting him to death. They made a formal treaty with him, prisoner though he was, by which, in consideration of his being allowed to pass through the United States, he agreed to order the remainder of his troops to leave Texas immediately and further contracted that he would acknowledge the independence of the State—or would advise it on his arrival in Mexico, I do not remember precisely the terms. He gave the order at once for the removal of his troops, and it was obeyed.

“It must be admitted, in conclusion, that, while Santa Anna pursued the worst policy in the world in his barbarous treatment of prisoners of war, Houston pursued the very best in restraining the strong impulse to take the life of the bloodthirsty Mexican miscreant. It is always dangerous to give an enemy a battle-cry such as ‘Remember the Alamo.’ ”

## CHAPTER XVII

HITCHCOCK DEFENDS GAINES. THE NEGRO INTERPRETER.

“LIKE DIS COUNTRY BERRY WELL.” A WICKED WAR WITH MEXICO. COURT OF INQUIRY AT FREDERICK. HITCHCOCK A WITNESS. OFFENDS SCOTT. SANTA ANNA A CAPTIVE

**D**URING June, 1836, Captain Hitchcock had several interviews with President Jackson and his Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, and explained and vigorously defended the conduct and movements of General Gaines on the Withlacoochee in Florida. The reason, he said, why the General did not cross the river and fight the Seminoles was “because he feared it would merely disperse them and drive them to the Everglades, postponing peace, instead of hastening its arrival.” The Florida Indians were not in a temper to be managed arbitrarily or to be driven angrily out of the home of their fathers. Captain Hitchcock illustrated this by repeating to the President the interview of General Jesup with Chief “Jumper” in trying to enforce the fraudulent “treaty” of 1832. Jesup was arrogant:

“Tell him,” he said to the negro interpreter, “that they *must* all go to their new country.”

The interpreter repeated the command and the chief’s answer. “Well, massa, he say he like dis country berry well an no wants leab um.”

“But tell him,” pursued the General, “that they *MUST* go—if they do not go they will be carried away—tell him that, Primus.”

“Well, massa, I teld um. He say he like dis country where fader live and mudder. Don’ want no new country.”

“But tell him, Primus, that they *MUST* go to the new

home west. Tell him that the Great Father at Washington will send much, much troops and cannon and drive them all out. Make him understand that."

The negro interprets.

"Well, Primus, what does he say now?"

"Putty much same t'ing he say 'fore, massa—Bress God, dis berry fine country. Fader, mudder, live here an chil'n—he no wanto go nowhere 't all."

General Jackson indulged in a forced laugh but seemed not to be much impressed by the illustration.

On July 8th, Captain Hitchcock received orders assigning him to the recruiting service in New York City, where he relieved Major P. F. Smith.

Diary: "I hardly know what it is proper to do.<sup>1</sup> When I left General Gaines all was quiet on the Sabine. I was temporarily attached to his staff and had his orders to return to him from Washington, but I thought the order was for my accommodation, and, believing active service in that quarter at an end, I did not hesitate to avail myself of Major Smith's offer to relieve him at New York. Now I hear that General Gaines has actually crossed the Sabine and gone with his army to Nacogdoches in Texas. I am puzzled what to do. I regard the whole of the proceedings in the Southwest as being wicked as far as the United States are concerned. Our people have provoked the war with Mexico and are prosecuting it not for 'liberty' but for land, and I feel averse to being an instrument for these purposes."

While recruiting in New York, Captain Hitchcock suggested improvements by which that service could be rendered more effective and useful, and they were so obviously desirable that the War Department at once adopted them.

On November 28, 1836, a court of inquiry convened at Frederick, Md. "to inquire into the causes of the failure of the campaign under Generals Gaines and Scott against the Seminoles." General Gaines, tarrying in the South, requested that the court might be held there, and, when his request was unheeded, appointed Captain Hitchcock to represent him at Frederick. The Captain asked leave of the court to retire

<sup>1</sup> General Gaines wrote, July 25, 1836, from "Camp Sabine": "I am anxiously looking for your return as my Inspector-General."



during the examination of General Scott, delicacy forbidding him to listen to disclosures which might be important to General Gaines. General Scott amiably protested against his withdrawal for such a reason, expressing the highest confidence in his intelligence, discretion, and honor. But Captain Hitchcock persisted, and returned temporarily to New York City.

Early in December the African Colonization Society, Henry Clay President, renewed its proposal of three years before and unanimously elected Captain Hitchcock to be Governor of Liberia. These efforts to secure his co-operation were accompanied by a definite declaration that its "principal object was to Christianize Africa." Captain Hitchcock notes in his diary, "I determined not to place myself under the direction of such managers and declined the appointment without comment."

On Jan. 12, 13, and 14, 1837, Captain Hitchcock gave evidence before the court at Frederick "in extenso" concerning the Scott-Gaines campaigns in Florida. "I took a principal part in General Gaines's defence: prepared nearly all the questions for witnesses; procured information; examined the documents laid before the court by General Scott, and wrote out a series of remarks upon them which General Gaines adopted almost verbatim in his defence, etc., etc."

It seemed to be fated that General Scott should think Captain Hitchcock hostile to him. When he was called before the court, General Scott asked him two questions, and, when they were answered, bluntly informed the witness that nothing more was desired of him. Of the sequel the witness subsequently wrote:

"Was I to acquiesce in being discharged from the stand while so much of my knowledge of the matter under investigation remained undisclosed? I could not assent to it in justice to myself as a witness under oath. Neither would I assent to it as having been a staff officer of General Gaines in his campaign, knowing, as I did, that my testimony was important to him. How could I abandon the interests of General Gaines under those circumstances without being recreant to every principle of honor and chivalry? Justice made it my imperative duty to speak and tell the whole truth. I did so, but

without making the slightest remark calling for the censure of General Scott. He, however, seemed very hastily to adopt the impression that I was seeking to injure him; and he addressed the court, referring to me in language and manner that placed a barrier between us. . . . During the whole of my intercourse with General Gaines I labored incessantly to suppress the causes of irritation between him and General Scott. It was I alone who induced him to erase whole pages of personal reflections from his defence at Frederick."

"Fred'k, Md., Jan. 17, '37. According to the treaty made with Houston, General Santa Anna, President of Mexico, arrived here this morning on his way to Washington. The officers of the court of inquiry, with others in attendance, upon its adjournment, called at Robust's Hotel and paid their respects to the distinguished stranger. He is a Spaniard in appearance, on the whole, but is of a slighter figure than I had expected to find. Is about 5 feet 10 inches, of a very commanding and dignified presence, of graceful manners and a rather benign countenance. Smiled at his misfortunes, and for my life I could not believe he ever gave the order for the massacre of the Goliad—he has always denied giving the order). It was sad to see him, fallen from the highest estate on this continent next to that of our own Presidency, and now travelling alone, and unattended except by two Texan officers. His aid, Almonte, has gone on in advance to Washington. Santa Anna's manners and whole appearance indicate a man accustomed to command and accustomed to give his opinions with authority. He speaks only Spanish, and but very little is said, as the interpreter himself is but poorly acquainted with that language."

## CHAPTER XVIII

ST. LOUIS IN 1837. FRAUDS ON THE WINNEBAGOES. THE INDIANS FIND A FRIEND. GREEDY PLUNDERERS OUTWITTED. TO WASHINGTON WITH FREMONT. ACROSS PRAIRIE IN MUD WAGONS. ACCOUNTS WITHOUT A FLAW

ON Feb. 15, 1837, the Secretary of War voluntarily detailed Captain Hitchcock to the important service of disbursing officer in the Indian Bureau—making him virtually superintendent of all Indian affairs in the West. He left on March 14th for St. Louis with a large amount of money, expecting to disburse \$300,000 and perhaps much more.

“My orders for Indian duty were issued the 2d of March and were received at New York the 6th. I left New York the 11th; arrived at Washington the 13th and was offered by General Macomb the clothing bureau, just vacated by Major Garland (double rations and large commutation for quarters, and fuel allowed). I declined, pleading a disposition not to seem vacillating, having but just received orders for duty in the Indian Department. The General also asked me how I would like to go back to West Point. Expressed regret at my having left there. Spoke freely of wrongs done me by General Jackson, etc.”

Life in St. Louis proved monotonous. Daniel Webster visited the city on the steamboat *Robert Morris*, arriving on June 9th and having an enthusiastic public reception and barbecue. Captain Hitchcock remained in St. Louis two years, performing the duties of General William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs there, who was permanently disabled. Captain Hitchcock soon found enough business to occupy all of his time in an effort to prevent the consummation of a great



fraud on the Chippewas, Sioux, and Winnebago Indians of Wisconsin.

By a treaty with the Winnebagoes, made in 1837, in which they ceded all of their lands on the east side of the Mississippi, it was stipulated that \$200,000 should be applied to paying the dishonored debts of traders to the Winnebagoes, and that \$100,000 should be paid to those having one quarter or more of Winnebago blood. Similar treaties existed with the other two nations. The President appointed a commission to effect the just distribution of this money, under definite instructions from Washington. The money was sent to Captain Hitchcock to be paid out by him on draft or requisition of the commissioners.

The first demands for the money came in the shape of drafts made payable, in behalf of certain Indians, to "attorneys in fact" or to "trustees" who had given no security. On investigation Captain Hitchcock found that most of the "attorneys in fact" were acting for those who were perfectly competent to collect the money in person, and he inferred that the bankrupt "trustees," who had given no bonds, would probably use the money themselves. Inquiring further and industriously taking testimony for months among the Indians, he found that the trustees and attorneys had in fact bought up the claims at a fraction of their real value, by deceiving the claimants, telling them that very little was due them, that the attorneys represented the government, that the U. S. Treasury was nearly out of money and nothing would be paid unless present offers were accepted, etc. Both forgery and perjury were resorted to, and bribery was not disdained. It was further learned that a Philadelphia lawyer had succeeded in getting assignments of about four fifths of the entire amount to himself. Captain Hitchcock thereupon declined to pay a dollar of the money on any assignment or to any trustee, attorney in fact, or even commissioner, or to anybody except the half-breed claimants in person, and appealed to Washington.

The commissioners had made it a rule to give a draft for about one half the amount to which the claimant was entitled. In the case of sixteen persons whose claims were thus secured, the sum of \$20,600 was paid in drafts on Captain Hitchcock,

where \$52,300 was due and was afterwards actually paid—the drafts being repudiated.

In his report to the Secretary of War, Captain Hitchcock says:

“I have crossed the purposes of a band of greedy speculators and brought upon myself the maledictions of many who will pretend an infinite degree of sympathy for the very half-breeds whom they have cheated and almost robbed by what will be boldly put forth as a legal proceeding. Be the consequences what they may, I rejoice that I have, for a few weeks at least, suspended the execution of this business. One claim of \$1800 was sold under duress for \$400. Can such a transaction pass in review without condemnation because it may wear the color of law? It is monstrous; and, if lawful, the law is a scourge to the innocent.”

So the payments were made to the Indians themselves, and the commissioners, who had been appointed “to protect these wards of the nation,” lost the money they had basely paid or else obtained a refund from such Indians as were willing to pay it back.

Thereupon there was a howl of indignation from all the plunderers who were disappointed and defeated in the frauds, but Captain Hitchcock’s defiant attitude was heartily approved by the Secretary of War and the President.

The men who were defeated in this robbery, thenceforth to be known as the “Winnebago frauds,” had expected to divide among themselves a fortune of half a million dollars.

Captain Hitchcock had managed the extensive department so successfully and exhibited so much courage, skill, and tact in dealing with its problems, that he was forthwith promoted to be major of the 8th Infantry—or, rather, advanced, for he was appointed over the heads of several captains who were his seniors, and his appointment was dated back to July 7, 1838. Senator Thomas H. Benton was the first to notify him of his appointment in the new regiment, and Major Hitchcock’s acknowledgment of the kindly intercession is so characteristic that it cannot be wholly omitted here:

“ . . . Do me the justice to believe that the appointment itself scarcely gave me more satisfaction than your letter, evincing, unsolicited, your interest in my welfare. I can



now remark that I might possibly have written to you in relation to my own affairs during the last session of Congress, but I could not bear that any one should suppose me capable of attempting to convert the private acquaintance I had the pleasure to form with you last year to my personal advantage. As that acquaintance resulted in unmixed delight in your family, my hope of advancement could not induce me to subject my feelings to the remotest suspicion of selfishness. If there seems anything odd in this, I pray you to impute it to the simplicity of my life and the singleness of purpose with which I desire you to tender my best respects to Mrs. Benton and my best regards to the younger members of your family, while I subscribe myself, Yours most truly."

Being shortly ordered to Washington to close out his accounts, he left St. Louis on Jan. 8, 1839, and arrived at the national capital on the 23d in company with Lieutenant John C. Fremont. They travelled in "mud-wagons" to the middle of Ohio.

"One of the most abominable roads I have ever attempted to travel. We were in mud all the way, and had very frequently to walk, both night and day. . . .

"Some persons here seem to give great importance to my opinions touching the proceedings under the Winnebago treaty. I stopped the payment of \$100,000 some weeks ago, and to-day General Macomb, the Secretary of War, told me that my step in the business put the War Department on its guard here and induced a suspension of \$200,000 more, and he has since become satisfied that there was abundant necessity for it. Fremont also brought a letter from the celebrated explorer and savant Nicollet, in the highest degree complimentary to me. . . . I am plainly told at the War Department that my course at St. Louis has saved \$300,000 from pillage. Alluding to the proceedings of the commissioners whose purposes I checked and in fact broke up, the Secretary told me that he could not express his gratitude to me for the service I had rendered; that I had saved the Department from the odium of one of the most shame ful transaction she ever knew."

All the testimony and letters in this famous case were printed by the government in a public document of 112 pages (Doc. No. 229, H. R. War Dept., 25th Congress, 3d Session)



which ends with the following paragraph in a letter to Hon. Hartley Crawford, Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

“As for General ——’s insinuation that I desired to retain and use the public money, as a reason for my not paying the drafts, I blush for him, while I appeal to the case of the Sioux half-breed money and deny it. He should have been ashamed of the meanness that could induce him to utter such an insinuation; but I spare him in pity for his weakness, while I despise his malice.

“E. A. HITCHCOCK,  
“*Major, Disbursing Agent.*”

The St. Louis *Republican* said, “Such a series of frauds and malpractices as this document discloses we have not witnessed before,” and it praises “the integrity and humanity” of Major Hitchcock and declares that his vigilance “in arresting the fraud before its consummation deserves the praise of every philanthropist.”

After his accounts for the disbursement of a million and a half of dollars had been adjusted and allowed,<sup>1</sup> Major Hitchcock was ordered to return to St. Louis and Prairie du Chien to still stand guard over the public moneys.

Major Hitchcock was ordered on court-martial duty at Fort Winnebago and returned to the West by way of Niagara Falls and the Great Lakes.

“Chicago, Ills., Aug. 22, 1839. Arrived about noon to-day at this, the great example of the wild speculations of '36 and '37. Property here has fallen nine tenths in value—if ‘value’ be a proper term. A lot for which \$4000 had been refused has just sold for \$400. Most of the tenements have been erected hastily of wood for temporary use.”

The death by yellow fever of his brother Henry in Alabama, Aug. 11, 1839, affected his mind powerfully. Judge Hitchcock had greatly thriven in Alabama. He went there in 1816, five years after his graduation from the University of Vermont and three years after the death of his father, having just been admitted to the bar. He borrowed \$300 from a neighbor, went down the Ohio in a row-boat, and made his way across

<sup>1</sup> The Treasury Department said, “Without a flaw of any kind in your accounts.”

the almost pathless forest from Natchez to Mobile. He applied himself so earnestly to the law that he at once took a high and commanding position. In 1818 he was made Secretary and Treasurer of the Territory of Alabama, and shortly afterwards, Attorney-General. He lived most of the time at Cahaba, the capital, now an unimportant post-town. His professional engagements took him into adjoining States, and he was a guest of General Jackson at the Hermitage, in Tennessee. In 1825 Lafayette visited him, desiring to pay his respects to Judge Hitchcock's mother, whose father, Ethan Allen, he had personally known. In 1835 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State. His death in mid-life was universally mourned.<sup>1</sup> A widow and four children survived him. His eldest son, Henry, became an eminent lawyer in St. Louis and President of the Bar Association of the United States; the younger, Ethan Allen, was successively a China merchant, a manufacturer, Ambassador to Russia, and Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinets of Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt.

Obtaining leave of absence for six months, beginning in October, 1839, Major Hitchcock went South to settle his brother's estate, the property, amounting to some two million dollars, having become much confused and involved. The voyager tells in his diary of the cost of getting to Mobile, scarcely half the way by steam: "from Washington to Potomac Creek, \$4; to Richmond, \$3.50; to Weldon, \$8; to Charleston, \$15; to Augusta, \$10; to Greensboro, \$4.25; to Columbus, \$20; to Montgomery, \$12; to Mobile, \$25;—total, \$101.75."

<sup>1</sup> An obituary in the *Mobile Chronicle* says: "The sudden demise of this distinguished citizen has sent a thrill through every heart of this community. His long residence here, his extensive possessions, his enlarged views, his public spirit, his admirable energy of character, had identified Judge Hitchcock with the best interests of Mobile; and his affability of manner and his readiness to aid by his counsel, his influence, his personal exertion, his credit and his purse, had endeared him to hundreds. At all times he was remarkable for strict integrity, a nice sense of honor, and all those amiable qualities which confer grace and dignity on a man in his personal intercourse."

The Mobile bar met and passed resolutions of deep regret, and Chief Justice Collier, said to the court: "Each one of us knew the quickness of his perceptions, the frankness of his demeanor, and the power of his argumentation. His social virtues are attested by his boundless benevolence and charity, evidences of which will long survive him. He was a rare model of kindness and affection. His example should teach the young aspirant for the honors of the profession that the only certain road to eminence is an elevated morality and a ceaseless industry."

## CHAPTER XIX

VARIED SERVICE AND RETURN TO FLORIDA. THE GOVERNMENT  
IN THE WRONG. PERSECUTION OF INDIANS. HITCHCOCK  
PROPOSES CONCILIATION. VACILLATION OF ARMISTEAD.  
COOCOCHEE IN COUNCIL. THE "RED MAN'S BROTHER"

DURING the early months of 1840, Major Hitchcock was at Washington. On April 25th he dined with Representative John Bell, Chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. During a call at the White House, he was quite surprised because President Van Buren talked politics incessantly and was cheerful and jovial though the election seemed going against him. "If Harrison is elected," predicts the bold diarist, "the Whig party will be split up in a very short time." He seems to have been endowed with prescience.

In May he spent some days at Madison Barracks, New York, during the Canada border disturbances, and then proceeded to his (the 8th) regiment, Colonel Worth, at Fort Winnebago, "Camp McKown," in central Wisconsin.

"June 22. We are ordered to St. Louis (Jefferson Barracks) and then, after the sickly season, to Florida. I saw the beginning of the Florida campaigns in 1836, and may see the end of them unless they see the end of me. The government is in the wrong, and this is the chief cause of the persevering opposition of the Indians, who have nobly defended their country against our attempt to enforce a fraudulent treaty. The natives used every means to avoid a war, but were forced into it by the tyranny of our government."

On August 21st an order came for the regiment to return to Wisconsin to remove the Winnebagoes. This order was countermanded the next morning while hasty preparations were



being made. "So it is; a breath moves us and a breath stays us, and that breath may come from an intoxicated general to one almost bed-ridden. General —— did not draw a sober breath at Fort Crawford after our arrival."

But in September the start was at last made for Tampa Bay, Florida. In the middle days of October the diarist finds himself becalmed in the Gulf of Mexico with four companies of his regiment. Worrying does not seem to raise the wind, so he spends his time reading Hobbes, Hegel, Locke, Cousin, and Kant, and philosophizing thereon:

"It is plain that Goethe was a pantheist, and I see that a pantheist may be a Christian, a Mohammedan, and a heathen at the same time. Pantheism ought to be regarded as the very reverse of atheism, being the admission of everything and the denial of nothing. He has the most accurate knowledge of God who has the most comprehensive knowledge of Nature . . . for these two are one."

"But little wind—and that ahead. On board, 350 men. Somewhat seasick. Food bad. Much of supplies unfit for use. On half rations. The men catch rain in their caps to drink. We are drifting towards Yucatan. No medical officer aboard. Have but little trouble keeping order."

The Major thus lightly notes the annoyances and distresses of the voyage, and plunges anew into Kant, Hegel, and Goethe. His serenity is undisturbed, and he records, "To fear a hell hereafter and yet enjoy tranquillity on earth is a contradiction and an impossibility." On the twentieth day out he enters Tampa Bay, at the end of fifty pages of closely written comment on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

On October 27th he starts northward for Fort King in command of a party of troops, and five days later passes near the site of the Dade massacre of five years before. Appearances abundantly indicate that the Seminole War is not yet "ended for the last time."

"Fort King, Nov. 4, 1840. Arrived yesterday sun an hour high. Our entire regiment is now here. General Armistead is expected to-day or to-morrow and the Indian chiefs are to meet him here by appointment.

"General Armistead having assured me that I shall take charge of the Seminole delegation if one is sent to Washington,

I have spoken to some of the officers to find out what policy they prefer.

"The treaty of Payne's Landing was a fraud on the Indians: They never approved of it or signed it. They are right in defending their homes and we ought to let them alone. The country southward is poor for our purposes, but magnificent for the Indians—a fishing and hunting country without agricultural inducements. The climate is against us and is a paradise for them. The army has done all that it could. It has marched all over the upper part of Florida. It has burned all the towns and destroyed all the planted fields. Yet, though the Indians are broken up and scattered, they exist in large numbers, separated, but worse than ever. . . . The chief, Coocoochee, is in the vicinity. It is said that he hates the whites so bitterly that 'he never hears them mentioned without gnashing his teeth.' " <sup>1</sup>

Hereupon Major Hitchcock proposed that the southern part of the peninsula should be given up for the permanent home of such Indians as chose to remain, and he canvassed the officers concerning that project. Almost every man approved it, though several expressed a fear that it "would injure the army" by showing its inefficiency.

At Fort King General Armistead met Halec Tustenugga and Tiger Tail in conference. Little progress towards peace was made. The General here received a letter from the Secretary of War authorizing the use of money to bribe the chiefs to convey their tribes to Arkansas, or, failing in that, authorizing them to reside "for an indefinite period" in Florida below Tampa Bay. At a council of war Major Hitchcock advocated vigorous action on the lines of this authority. He

<sup>1</sup> This distinguished chief gave his views of the white man's policy as follows: "I was once a boy. Then I saw the white man afar off. I hunted in these woods, first with bow and arrow, then with rifle. I saw the white man and was told he was my enemy. I could not shoot him as I would a wolf or bear. Yet like these he came upon me. Horses, cattle, and fields he took from me. He said he was my friend. He abused our women and children and told us to go from the land. Still he gave us his hand in friendship. We took it. Whilst taking it he had a snake in the other. His tongue was forked. He lied, and stung us. I asked but for a small piece of these lands—enough to plant and to live upon—far south, a spot where I could lay the ashes of my kindred, and even this has not been granted to me. I feel the irons in my heart."



concluded with an estimate of necessary expenditures, as follows:

To the chiefs.....	\$5, 000
To the warriors, themselves.....	5, 000
For 1,000 blankets @ \$3.....	3, 000
For 200 rifles and ammunition.....	3, 000
For 2,000 shirts.....	2, 000
For 2,000 yards of cloth.....	3, 000
	<hr/>
	\$21, 000

"This supposes and provides for 200 warriors or 1000 persons,—one band. I carried the estimate to the General, telling him that if necessary he might safely double, treble, or quadruple the amount, and the nation would thank him. . . . Halec Tustenugga dined with our staff mess yesterday. He wore his headdress of long black ostrich feathers and was waited on like a prince by his followers."

Ignoring the advice of his staff, the General coolly pocketed the money proposition, and the proposition conceding territory, and drew up another treaty like the first, and offered it to Halec to sign. The chief took instant alarm at this duplicity, and fled to the woods in the night of November 14th with his whole party. Major Hitchcock reports to his diary:

"General Armistead is entirely subdued and broken-spirited. His confidence in his success has been boundless and his letters to Washington have doubtless been written in that temper. I cannot help thinking it is partly his own fault. If he had freely offered the Indians an ample reward to emigrate, or the undisturbed possession of the country south of Tampa Bay, he might have secured peace. I have suggested his making the overture now, but he declines. Not only did he refuse to make the offer he was authorized to make, but at the very time when Halec was here in amicable talk he secretly sent a force into his rear, threatening his people at home! . . . I confess to a very considerable disgust in this service. I remember the cause of the war, and that annoys me. I think of the folly and stupidity with which it has been conducted, particularly of the puerile character of the present commanding general, and I am quite out of patience."



Primus, the negro interpreter, being sent for by the General at this point, freed his mind, respectfully, but very plainly, as to the policy of sending hostile forces into the swamps to kill the Indians while pretending to desire peace and trying to persuade them to emigrate. He expatiated on the contradiction between the white man's talks and acts, and insisted that the Indians would be perfectly satisfied with the country below Tampa. Dull as the commanding general seems to have been, his mind was somewhat impressed by the wisdom of the ex-slave and he issued orders withdrawing Major Dearborn from his march southward. Major Hitchcock breaks out in his diary:

"This is my thunder! Before the regiment left here in October I advised the General not to send Dearborn down that way. I suggested the plan of pacification, but I don't care who ends the cursed war, so it be ended. . . . The General holds the olive branch in one hand and the sword in the other and attempts to use both at the same time."

As a result of this vacillating conduct the Indians broke out and attacked a wagon train near Miccanopy, killing several men and women. In a skirmish in southern Florida Major Harney captured six Indians and immediately hanged five of them to a tree, and shortly afterwards was promoted to be Colonel for "gallant and meritorious conduct."

During this winter there was comparative quiet but little real progress. Major Hitchcock was sent to Key West, Fort Dallas (Miami), and Fort Pierce on Indian River, and he collected 57 Indians who had surrendered and promised to go to Arkansas. During the next February (1841) he established at Fort Cummings, about fifty miles east of Tampa, a camp of a portion of the 8th Regiment, the object being to invite Coocoochee ("Wild Cat"), the chief of the Kissimmee Indians, to a parley for the purpose of inducing him to go to Arkansas. Coocoochee came in, and Colonel Worth, who had now come to the tent, offered him \$4000 for himself and \$30 for each warrior if they would accede to the wishes of the government. The chief orally assented to the proposition, but asked delay, refused to give any guaranty, and left next day promising to return in ten days and carrying off with him his little daughter, who had been captured by the troops and kept as a hostage.

“Our policy now is to ask the Indians in, assuring them that we are their very good friends (the evidence of which it is difficult to make them see), and finally to buy them, with about ten times the money that would have purchased the whole tribe at the beginning of our intercourse with them, before we had outraged them by injury, fraud, and oppression. We can do more with silver than with lead, and yet save silver in the end.”

“You are puzzled to know,” he writes to Rev. W. G. Eliot, “whether a camp life deserves envy or compassion. Perhaps a little of both. Just at this moment I am in a tent under a bower, giving me a delightful shade in a current of soft, genial air, on the borders of a beautiful lake in the midst of open pine woods entirely free from undergrowth, the whole country covered with a fresh luxuriant grass except where dotted with lakelets of as pure water as ever filled a gentleman’s pitcher or a soldier’s tin cup. We have hunters who supply our whole command with more venison and wild turkeys than we can eat. This is the paradise of camp life, but we march in cold and rain, in mud and dust, in hot sand under a burning sun, with irregular meals or none, without tents, and at times so near the enemy that we must dispense with fires when wet and cold at the end of a long march. This service is harder on me than on most others, for I know the cruel wrongs to which the enemy has been subjected, so I cannot help wishing that the right may prevail, which is, to use your own language, ‘praying for the Indians.’ ”

True to his character and habits, Major Hitchcock had frequent recourse to his diary during this troublesome winter, recording every week and almost every day thoughtful comments on the great philosophical books of the world. He writes a word of explanation:

“In Camp Cummings. 23d March, 1841. It may seem singular to me some time hence, if I refer to this diary, that, in the midst of Indian councils, in the centre of Florida, in a state of war, I should so frequently make theological notes which are commonly the fruit of leisure and ease. But the fact is that here, except when actually engaged in councils or conflicts with Indians, we are sitting still in camp, waiting events, and every day is as quiet as the Sabbath.”



He accompanies this with an elaborate argument concerning God, nature, necessity, faith, and knowledge, tradition and miracle,—a negative creed rather than a positive affirmation.

Coocoochee followed the example of the other chiefs in being as good as his word. He came into camp on the 19th of March and held a very amiable council with the Major.

"He spoke at length of his people and their scattered condition; of their alarm and fear of danger through the treachery of the whites. He said he had given up the war. He knew that it could not last forever. It must end some time, and the time had come. But it was necessary to have a few weeks in which to collect his people, for somebody who had been in must go out again and vouch for our peaceful intentions. Too much haste would spoil everything, for they would think it a trick and hide. . . . His representation seemed to me reasonable and I told him so."

Presently Colonel Worth arrived and took charge of the conversation. He failed to understand Coocoochee, tried to browbeat him, and flew into a passion and charged the Indians with trying to deceive him. He exclaimed that he did not care if the war lasted fifteen years longer; whereat Coocoochee said, "The Colonel talks like an old woman."

"During the council the chief has so frequently referred to me as understanding him that after it broke up, and Coocoochee had walked away, the Colonel forced a bantering air of good-nature and, turning to me, said, 'I believe I shall have to hand him over to you, Major,' and he added, bitterly smiling, 'you have completely won his heart, Major!' Coocoochee shortly afterwards returned, came up to us, and, laying his hand on my shoulder, said I was his brother."

A curious coincidence of opinion!

"Camp, March 21. The Colonel with Coocoochee left here for Tampa or the camp of Coosa Tustenugga, not certain which. News from Tampa is that 280 Indians, men, women, and children, are on board of the transport—embarked for Arkansas. Eighty-three more are at Sarasota, a few miles south of Tampa.

"Camp, March 30. The Seminole chief, Coocoochee, arrived from Tampa last evening. He came at once to see



me and sat till ten o'clock talking. He is on his way to gather up his people and wants provisions for a few days and some presents of calico. Said he had been promised leggings and a stroud<sup>1</sup> by Colonel Worth, but had not received them; also \$2 which the Colonel owed him for two heron's feathers. I gave him \$2 at a venture, also calico for his wife and daughter and a shirt for himself and each of the men with him, and a red blanket. He then left.

"After dinner he sat and talked with me some time. He said he had determined to give up, but he had not been defeated. He could hold out longer, and if his people were half as many as the whites they would sweep the palefaces from the face of the earth. He then apologized for the seeming braggadocio. If all the red men were like Coocoochee they could do a deal of mischief."

The reader will feel that there is something extremely pathetic in the proposition which the despairing chief now made in behalf of his people, as recorded thus in the diary:

"In the course of our talk Coocoochee asked me why the white people would not be satisfied with coming into Florida and occupying 'all the good places' and letting the Indians have 'all the bad places.' There was reason in this, for truly, if the Seminoles would agree to it, they are now so few that the whites could compel them to obey their laws. But I explained to him that where Indians and whites were neighbors the Indian men became drunken vagabonds, and the women worse."

Coocoochee had been a little shy during the interviews with General Worth; perhaps not unreasonably, for a year or two before he and a number of his people had accepted an invitation from General Jesup on the St. John's to visit him, with every assurance of personal safety, but as soon as they were in his power that General seized them, made them all prisoners, confining them in a common jail at St. Augustine. Osceola died while in prison, but Coocoochee escaped and was "a fugitive from justice" when he received his second invitation. On this occasion he suffered no restraint, but he was not so fortunate a year later, when under assurances of safety and freedom, he and his warriors came into Tampa for a con-

<sup>1</sup> A rag blanket worn by the Indians.

ference. When a hundred or more of them were comfortably assembled in the large quartermaster's warehouse, armed soldiers surrounded the building, they were taken prisoners, and hurried off to Arkansas. It was now announced that the Florida War had been brought to an honorable close and Colonel Worth was rewarded by being made a Brigadier-General.

Long before this time Major Hitchcock had become certain that a sanguinary war against the Florida Indians was at once unjust and unwise. It had now gone on for more than five years; two thirds of the Indians had been taken to Arkansas, but the rest were more hostile, more defiant, and more secretive than ever. Some of them had been treacherously slain and many of them captured under a flag of truce; some had been subjected to mutilation and torture; prisoners had been deliberately hanged; and the survivors had become so terrorized that they now refused to hold any parley with the whites.

At this juncture Major Hitchcock had a long and earnest correspondence with Congressman John Bell, chairman of the Indian Committee of the House of Representatives, and this correspondence was continued when, shortly after, Mr. Bell became President Tyler's Secretary of War. One of the Major's letters on this subject is fourteen pages long, and the next one eighteen pages, but they proved so interesting that they were read, not only by Mr. Bell, but by the President, who endorsed upon them: "I have read with deep interest Major Hitchcock's letters, which are now returned. They are highly instructive and evince entire sincerity. If peace, as suggested by Major Hitchcock, could be negotiated, leaving them a portion of the country, the tide of white population would roll in and do more service than an army."

In these letters the writer proposed a cessation of hostilities and an amicable truce and friendly offices instead of fighting. He proposed, also, that the southern part of the peninsula should be given to the Indians, where they could live undisturbed,—a policy finally adopted, as to the southern Indians. He moreover narrated the causes of the war, and showed that it resulted from forgery by officials and bribery and treachery on the part of the United States Government. He said:



"Our troops, in moving about the country, have scattered the Indians in every direction; to avoid us, they hide in small parties, taking every precaution to prevent discovery—not building fires, even, for fear of disclosing their hiding-places by the smoke. It is almost impossible for them to find each other; while searching for their friends they may be within a few yards and not know of each other's vicinity.

. . . . To carry on such a war seems an idle, if not a wicked waste of life and treasure. Lately a party of dragoons, moving a hundred and fifty miles and sending out detachments to right and left, sweeping a breadth of country all the way, brought, in as captives, one man, his wife, and five children!

"Not a single war party, after striking a blow, has been captured by us, so far as I know, out of the multitude of instances of pursuit since this war began. Flight with them has become a science. . . .

"The conclusion, then, is this: that the government will actually gain time and save money, lives, and reputation, by conceding something to the Indians under their present prejudices and alarm—acknowledging their possession (by a truce, not a treaty) of as much of the country as will satisfy them; then seeking amicable intercourse with them, dissipating their prejudices, allaying their fears, soothing them, and finally persuading them to go and join their friends in Arkansas by the promise of that justice which was denied them in the insolence of supposed power in the beginning of the war.

"There is now a tendency on the part of the Indians to abstain from acts of war. Let this be fostered by pacific communications. Some will come in and be induced to emigrate. Others will gradually lay aside the rifle, and the war will die a natural death. It may require time to accomplish this amicably; but it is certain that force cannot effect it in a much longer time if at all."



## CHAPTER XX

SUMMONED TO WASHINGTON. SUGGESTED FOR INSPECTOR-GENERAL. HOSTILITY OF GENERAL SCOTT. OFFER OF INDIAN BUREAU. DECLINES TO BECOME A PARTISAN. ADVISES SECRETARY ON FLORIDA AFFAIRS. TYLER'S VETO MESSAGE

EARLY in April, 1841, Major Hitchcock returned to Tampa with his command. He had held a long and candid correspondence with the Secretary of War, and on arriving at the coast was surprised and pleased to receive an order from General Macomb, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, to report to Washington immediately.

"Here, then, General Armistead and Colonel Worth are both disappointed in the miscarriage of the plan to force me to resign by refusing the leave to go to Washington which I asked for a month ago. Worth is as arrogant and domineering as pride can make a man. On the whole, my leave-taking is decidedly gratifying. I go from Florida with the war unfinished: but it may be unfinished five or ten years from now, if the management be not improved. I shall be able to give some useful hints to the authorities in Washington."

"Washington, May 1. Reported to General Macomb and asked if he had special orders for me. He said he had not, but added, 'The Secretary of War wants to see you: I don't know what about.' Called at once on Secretary Bell and spent a long evening with him. I had been much talked of, he said, for Inspector-General of the Army, but there was opposition. General Scott had called and 'respectfully but earnestly remonstrated' against my being assigned to duty in the War Department. He had referred to my conduct at the Frederick court-martial and said I was 'constitutionally' his enemy. I explained to Secretary Bell that this hostility

of General Scott arose from a misunderstanding on his part, and that he really owed me thanks for what I did at Frederick. The Indian Bureau is open to me, and the Secretary urged me to take it; but it will necessarily be a political office and I will not become a partisan, and have declined it. Am assured that my association with Mr. Bell is expected and ardently desired by the whole army, it being thought that I can assist him in protecting the interests of the service. But I told Mr. Bell that I should not only refuse to be Commissioner of Indian Affairs, but should decline any office that brought me near him if it would make his intercourse with General Scott difficult or unpleasant. The Secretary kindly said that he wished me to be near him, and he felt disposed to take a high hand with General S. and peremptorily overrule him. I strongly advised against it.

"We had a long talk about the Florida affairs, in which I urgently recommended the adoption of a pacific policy in closing the difficulties. Mr. B. was inclined to order a summer campaign. I argued strongly against it and wrote him a letter on the subject. He said he should lay it before the President.<sup>1</sup>

"The Secretary then told me that he had ordered General Scott to come to Washington; whereupon I, to simplify matters, left for New York."

"Returned to Washington May 13. General Scott declares that he has dismissed all prejudice against me and would himself be perfectly satisfied to have me near the Secretary, but thinks my acceptance of the position of Adjutant-General 'would do me irreparable injury.' I see in this his personal opposition, notwithstanding his disclaimer and his allegation to the Secretary that I possess 'talents of the very first order.'

"Washington, May 15. Secretary Bell to-day frankly asked my advice as to what he had better do to settle our affairs in Florida. I told him I would relieve General Armistead and assign the command to Colonel Worth. I would give the

<sup>1</sup> In this memorandum to the Secretary of War, found among Hitchcock's papers, he says: "In my letter to General A. I would intimate as an object of the order, the desire to relieve him from an arduous duty which he has for a long period prosecuted with great zeal and industry (omit ability)."

Colonel free scope and let him expect suitable acknowledgment in a brevet if successful.

"May 16th. Remarkable interview with Secretary of War. Spent the whole evening with him, by invitation, and again urged upon him the measures I deem expedient in Florida. He finally authorized me to draft two letters for him to sign, one relieving General Armistead and the other appointing Colonel Worth, just as I advised yesterday. I have done so, and have seen Mr. Bell again. He has consulted General Macomb and General Scott and both warmly approve—the latter said, 'Hitchcock's an able man, sir; an able man, sir!' Mr. Bell told Scott that if Worth put an end to the difficulties he would recommend him for a brevet, and Scott said: 'He'll break his neck, sir! He'll break his neck, sir!'"

Major Hitchcock was persistently urged for the Indian Bureau, but firmly declined. A special session of Congress met on May 31, and at the request of President Tyler Major Hitchcock prepared some paragraphs as to the condition of the army and the prosecution of the Seminole War. Mr. Bell assigned to him a room in the War Department and frequently called on him for advice and assistance concerning affairs at the front. General Wool and others, however, annoyed Major Hitchcock by assuming that he was absent from his regiment without leave, and the Secretary resented it when it accidentally came to his knowledge. "Mr. Bell sent for me to his office, where he assured me of his readiness to issue an order putting me on duty with him. I was, he went on to say, engaged in important public duties—'more important, as far as I can see, than those of any other officer'—and he declared that he could not dispense with my services and would not without a strong remonstrance, even if the President were to order it. He has given me every possible assurance to make my mind easy."

"Had a letter from Colonel Worth (Pilatka). Writes freely of all movements and plans; is evidently reconciled and pleased, indeed, that I can stand by him here."

"Wash'n., June 12. General Armistead arrived yesterday from Florida, and to-day had an interview with Secretary Bell. After leaving the Secretary he came to my room. While sitting with me I opened the door, hearing the voice



of Colonel Harney, and seeing both Harney and Colonel Twiggs I invited them in, saying, 'General Armistead is here.' At this the General arose and approached the door, meeting Colonel Harney. Twiggs, however, started off and had walked several paces when the General called to him. He turned and they approached each other. The General offered his hand, but the Colonel put his hands behind him. I heard nothing that the General said, but presume he asked, 'What is the reason for this?' as I distinctly heard Colonel Twiggs say 'I have no reason to assign to General Armistead.' The negro messenger was present and, to break a scene in the hall of the War Office, I immediately said, 'Walk in, gentlemen,' and urged the whole into my room, shutting the door. After a few moments the General left us. While he remained, he talked with Harney and I with Twiggs."

"June 15, '41. Yesterday I dined with the Secretary of War. Dinner given to please General Armistead. The Attorney-General, Mr. Crittenden, the 'great conservator,' Generals Tallmage, Macomb, Jesup, Wool, Jones, and others present. Dinner in French style, like that at General Macomb's."

About this time the diarist discusses free will at great length and gives elaborate reasons for his being a necessarian. He is impressed by the circumstance that amid the whirl and tumult of society his mind is "engaged in reveries upon strange questions and abstruse speculations concerning the mysteries of nature."

"June 25, 1841. Major-General Macomb died to-day at half past 2 P.M.—paralysis—third stroke."

"June 29—The General was buried yesterday in the Congressional graveyard about mid-day. Procession nearly a mile long, marshalled by General Jesup."

"General Parker came in and urged the abolishment of the office of major-general. Secretary Bell fell in with the idea, and suggested that Scott, being before the public as a probable candidate for the Presidency, might himself prefer to avoid the responsibility of office here meantime. I interposed a contrary opinion. . . . Even while we were talking a letter arrived from Scott in which he earnestly and strenuously pleaded for the appointment of major-general. 'I told you so,' I might have said."

"July 23, 1841. If the President vetoes the bank bill the Cabinet will disperse. In conversation with Mr. Bell this morning allusion was made to the President's 'breaking up the party,' and dispersing the Cabinet. 'If he does, I'll break his head!' said Mr. Bell—meaning, of course, politically."

"My mind has undergone changes. I feel stronger than I did. What appeared great has diminished. Generals and great men are pygmies. Principles, laws of Nature, truth—these alone seem grand."

"Washington, Aug. 11, '41. The House, by a majority of 31, passed the bill for a United States bank sent from the Senate three or four days ago, and the public mind is intensely excited with regard to its probable fate at the hand of the President. Many have thought he would veto the bill. This morning there was a Cabinet council and while it was in session, about 12 M., Mrs. Bell sent for me from her carriage at the door of the War Office.<sup>1</sup> I left my papers and went to see her. She said she had positive information that Mr. Tyler had determined to veto the bill, and it was his purpose to drive the present Cabinet to resign—or the greater part; also that she had been furnished with a list of the members pitched upon for the new Cabinet—mentioning Cushing for the State Department, and Poindexter and Peyton. She was much excited and wanted Mr. Bell to have a hint on no account to resign, but to force the President's hand, that he might have the odium of breaking up the Cabinet selected by Harrison—the people's choice.

"I shortly saw Mr. Bell and told him what I had heard. He thought the President would veto the bill, and it was uncertain what the Cabinet would then do.

"Aug. 13. It is believed that the President will veto the bill. The exultation of the (Locofocos) Democratic Jackson Van Buren men is boundless, and so is the indignation, rage, and disappointment of the Whigs. . . . During the canvass last year the bank mania rose very high, and the election is generally supposed to have turned on that question. Harrison was brought in, 't is generally thought, to establish a bank of the United States. He called an extra session

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. John Bell was a sister of Mrs. Judge Henry Hitchcock.

immediately after his inauguration to act upon this matter. Meantime, he died, and now Tyler vetoes the bill. It was distinctly a Whig measure and was introduced by Clay, whom Tyler, in the nominating convention last summer, ardently urged for President!"

"Aug. 16. The veto message is out—complete Locofoco. The first thing that strikes me is the treachery of Mr. Tyler's conduct towards his Cabinet—up to the last moment this morning not letting them know his decision. . . . The President has displeased the Locos also, by signing the bill repealing the sub-treasury law of last year."<sup>1</sup>

"Sept. 9. There is strong menace of war with England. It is even reported that she has sent her fleets to our coast. . . . This afternoon I wrote to Mr. Webster, the Secretary of State, that as a war with England would have to be closed by negotiations at last, it would perhaps be better to consider that the war was already over, and that we had done all the mischief to each other in our power, and so propose a commission and begin negotiations at once, for the adjustment of all the difficulties existing between the two nations."

"Sept. 15, '41. Major Churchill has been nominated Inspector-General, so I lose my promotion. If General Brady had been promoted to Scott's place instead of Wool, I should have been promoted. And this was in my power. General Scott was anxious for it and I overruled him with the Secretary—that is, if I had gone for Brady, the Secretary would have named him, and nothing could have prevented his appointment."

<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later five members of the Cabinet resigned, all except Daniel Webster.



## CHAPTER XXI

SPECIAL MISSION TO ARKANSAS. DINNER TO HENRY CLAY EN ROUTE. INVESTIGATES FRAUDS UPON CHEROKEES, ETC. WELCOMED BY JOHN ROSS AND COOCOOCHEE. MANNERS AND CUSTOMS. AIR FULL OF SCANDALS. FRAUDULENT ISSUES OF FOOD. VAST SYSTEM OF ROBBERY. STARVATION AND DECIMATION OF TRIBES. INDIAN LAWS AND SENSE OF JUSTICE

MAJOR HITCHCOCK was now senior in his grade and expecting promotion to be Lieutenant-Colonel. Instead of being ordered to rejoin his regiment in Florida, he was asked by the President if he would go to Arkansas to investigate alleged frauds against the Cherokees, and, being willing, it was so ordered. His appointment is dated Sept. 28, 1841, and advises him that he has been "selected with the express sanction of the President." He was now recognized as an expert concerning Indian affairs and as a tireless and fearless investigator. After dining with Mr. Bell's family on Sept. 29th he left for the West in a stage, having for company Hon. John J. Crittenden, late Attorney-General.

"Oct. 5. Steamboat *Saratoga* on the 'beautiful Ohio,' now a small muddy stream. Our steamer touches bottom every few miles, drawing 30 in.

"Oct. 9, 1841, Lexington, Ky. Dined with Judge Marshall, a slender man with black eyes. The dinner was in honor of Henry Clay, the great senator, and was attended by about a dozen of the first men of the place. Dinner well served: tone and temper of conversation admirable. At my end of the table, Tyler was uppermost as a topic. Mr. Clay gave the opinion that he was influenced in his vetoes by two motives—the desire for notoriety and that for re-

venge (on Botts for his letter). I remarked that he had succeeded in his first object. A discussion arose upon the effects of an impeachment—whether the President, pending impeachment, could exercise the prerogatives of office. Mr. Clay thought he could. I remarked that, if he could not, a majority in a factious spirit could impeach the President and suspend him from the functions of office in order to carry a favorite party measure through an acting President. Judge Robinson took up the discussion at my hint, but the conclusion as to several points was that the Constitution had not provided for them and cases had never come up. It was inquired what course would be pursued in case the President should be deranged. I inquired if removal would not be effected by the necessary action on his conduct which, under derangement, would subject him to impeachment. This seemed to strike General Combe. Mr. Clay, now over 60, is quite erect but looks feeble, and, though he talks familiarly, he speaks with measured slowness in the full, sonorous voice which has always distinguished him."

"Nov. 10. Lay by last night. Steamer broke 'hog chain.' Floodwood floats by. River rising.

"Nov. 18. Little Rock. Arrived yesterday at 3 P.M. About to go up river. On board is the Choctaw agent and Superintendent in Southwest. Have been introduced to him. The captain says many people in Little Rock are exceedingly anxious to know my business in this country, suspecting that some of their rascalities may come to light. Under the contracts which I was sent to investigate several hundred thousand dollars were thrown away. One Indian agent came here so poor that a man with a \$400 claim against him was glad to settle for \$100. Now he owns a considerable number of negroes and has offered \$17,000 for a plantation. This in four or five years, on a salary of \$1500! This agent has called on me and has just given me some statistical information: Sixteen or eighteen thousand Creeks; as many Cherokees; as many Choctaws and Chickasaws combined, in proportion of two Choctaws to one Chickasaw. These two tribes speak the same language. Have united in a government, with a council of thirty—twenty Choctaws to ten Chickasaws. Choctaws live east of Chickasaws. Both grow cotton



and hold negro slaves. Have laws against whisky-selling."

During the succeeding months Major Hitchcock was busy going from fort to reservation, from camp to camp, through Arkansas, investigating alleged frauds perpetrated by white officials against the Indians. Even before leaving Little Rock charges of corruption reached him that could not be ignored. On account of these reports the army paymaster attempted to browbeat him and force him into a causeless quarrel. On Nov. 23d he left Fort Smith and entered the Cherokee nation on horseback, pausing at Fort Gibson, "on the left bank of Grand River, two miles above its confluence with the Arkansas." The famous John Ross was still chief of the Cherokees, and after many years of harassment and persecution by the white settlers of Georgia, who refused to obey the mandate of the Supreme Court of the United States, he had at last reluctantly come with his people to this distant region.

"Nov. 28, 1841. Fort Gibson. I rode three miles to the Arkansas to-day. Left my horse and crossed in boat. Found the celebrated Coocoochee, the Seminole chief. He recollected me. Interpreted by Micco and the celebrated negro Abram. I told them that the President had sent me to see them and carry back a true word that he might know what to do for them. They both put in claims for property taken by the government for which they had never been paid. The chief said he had been promised kettles, axes, etc., but they had not come."

The talk with Coocoochee and Abram was protracted. Abram alluded to Florida and said that the Seminoles had resolved to make peace and move to the West as they had been directed to do, but when they tried to carry out Major Hitchcock's instructions, and sent out two negroes and two Indians to ask for a truce, they were answered, "Go to hell, G— d—— you! We ask no odds of you," and the Florida War thereupon continued.

"Tallequah, Capital of Cherokee nation, Nov. 30. As we approached Tallequah, where the national council sits this week, we met several persons riding out, men and women well dressed and wearing shawls—all well mounted. 'They don't look very wild,' I said to a companion. As we came



in sight of the capital, I saw a number of log houses ranged in order along streets—but the houses were very small. One was painted. ‘The council sits there’ said my companion, ‘and the chief lives over there,’ to the left. There were public tables, supplied by the Cherokee nation, to which everybody was invited to sit down.”

“Dec. 1. John Ross,<sup>1</sup> came from his residence near 12, noon, and rode into the middle of the council ground and tied his horse to a tree. Great numbers were standing round, but, Indian-like, no one approached him. I was the first to go up and speak to him. We shook hands; questions of civility passed, and we separated. He then began a general greeting. Many went up and shook hands. It was nearly one o’clock before he took his place in a sort of pulpit under a large shed and the committee and council and people assembled to hear the message, for he had just returned from Washington, where he had tried to get a new treaty. With Mr. Ross was Bushyhead, the Chief Justice, a good-looking, rather portly man, 30 or 40 years old. Ross read his message in English from manuscript, and it was translated into Cherokee by the Chief Justice, both standing. The auditors were seated or standing at pleasure, with hats on, some smoking, but all perfect order and silence. The seats were split logs supported by legs like a farmer’s stool.

“Ross is in some trouble, for his people suppose they have \$1,800,000 of their fund remaining; but it has been diminished till it is only a little over \$300,000.”

“Dec. 6. Fine clear morning. Have spent a day and night with John Ross. Dined yesterday with his brother, Lewis Ross. He is a wealthy merchant and lives in considerable style. His cottage is clapboarded and painted, his floor carpeted, his furniture—cane-bottom chairs of high finish, mahogany sofa, and Boston rocking-chairs, mahogany work-table, a very superior Chickering piano, on which his unmarried daughter, a young lady of about 18, just from school at Rahway, N. J., plays waltzes and sings. She is

<sup>1</sup> Ross’s Indian name was Kooescoowe. He became chief in 1828. While in Georgia a large bribe was offered him to induce his people to move west of the Mississippi, but he scornfully refused it, and his tempter was publicly disgraced.

lively and pretty, with rich flowing curls, fine eyes, and beautiful ivory teeth. Mrs. Ross is a portly, fine-looking woman, just returned from a three-years absence superintending her daughter's education.

"Lewis does n't like the missionaries. Could tell me nothing about their doctrines. I asked him about the fall of man, infinite sin, man's inability, the necessity of grace, expiatory sacrifice, etc. He said, 'I never trouble myself about those little things.'

"Bushyhead testified from his own personal knowledge to an officer's treachery in 1837, having been present in the camp as an agent in an endeavor to effect the peaceable removal of the Indians."

Major Hitchcock sought occasion to talk with many Indians about their condition. He visited the council in session. "These are a free-minded, free-spirited people, unconventional. Seem to be industrious and orderly. I have not seen a drunken man since I came into the nation. The habits of life are simple and natural. There are few shoemakers or professed tailors, but some blacksmiths. No arts of any consequence beyond building good log houses, with doors and windows, some with glass and sliding sashes. A good deal of poverty. No game of any consequence.

"The Osages sold an immense portion of this western country under a treaty negotiated by Gen. William Clark for a very small annuity—some \$8000 I think—yet the U. S. Senate very reluctantly ratified the treaty. I heard General Clark say that it was the hardest bargain against the Indians he ever made, and that if he was to be damned hereafter it would be for making that treaty."

"Fort Smith, Dec. 14. Many rumors of frauds on Chickasaws. Received statement yesterday from Secretary of War, which set forth that upwards of \$700,000 worth of provisions was purchased for and issued to the Chickasaws. Colonel Upshaw, Chickasaw agent, says that some of the agents employed to superintend the issue did not attend to their duty and he thinks some of the Indians have never got their rations. Have written to Secretary asking for copies of contracts, etc.

"Since, by my present duties, my attention has been



called more particularly to external objects, my notes are entirely changed in character—practical and not speculative.

“I have seen one gallows in the Cherokee nation—‘a sign of civilization.’ I have not heard of a jail of any sort. Most punishment is by whipping and this is said to be very sure in case of crime.”

Major Hitchcock had now organized a system of inquiry into the alleged frauds and had engaged secret agents to bring to light and justice the plunderers of these tribes. Ross alleged that the government agents were also agents of the contractors and so accessories. Spoiled beef was delivered to the Indians; they were charged with twice as much corn as they received; rotten blankets were served to them; false names were used; receipts were forged—all this gradually became obvious.

Feeling the importance of his mission and the necessity of having justice done and the dishonest punished, Major Hitchcock seems to have exhausted every means to discover the facts concerning the alleged corruption. If hearsay were evidence he heard enough to bring several men to prison. He spent nearly a week at Chief Ross's house, making memoranda of statements and obtaining important papers concerning the methods that had been employed. New Year's Day of 1842 found him taking voluminous notes of varied rascality. Apparently, the contractors had furnished very lean range cattle—so lean that they often fell down and died of starvation before reaching the almost equally famished Indians; they had given a fictitious weight and refused to re-weigh; they had delivered droves of cattle, and then laid traps for them, caught them, drove them off and issued them again; they had delivered in some instances more rations than could be cared for and protected, and then got possession of them again; and they had bribed interpreters, taken advantage of the ignorance of Indians, and defrauded them in every way. Gradually evidence of this was obtained.

It is recorded in this diary that the writer went during this winter to Fort Gibson; to the Sallisaw; to Webber's Landing, seventy-five miles from Fort Smith; to Marysville; to the Illinois River; to Fort Towson; back to Tallequah; to Doaksville; to Fort Wayne; to Daniels; to Thompson; in fact,



to all inhabited parts of the region, and that everywhere he sought and found important and distressing information. He spent a large part of January, 1842, in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, making constant investigation of the frauds of the contractors, of which he heard on every hand. "A nephew of the principal agent of the contractors has bought tickets or due-bills for beef at one and a-half cents a pound."

A good many testify that these men had bought up these due-bills for "little or nothing." Worn-out oxen and bulls were forced upon the half-starving people at an exorbitant price. Various white men are pointed out as having made \$10,000 to \$20,000 each in a year in this plunder of the helpless. Bribery, perjury, and forgery were the chief agents in these infamous transactions. Blacksmiths and wheelwrights were furnished to these tribes at high salaries and then they refused to do any work unless paid over again for it. Mills were paid for that never had existed.

The Indian agents and suttlers are found to be mostly inveterate gamblers. The story is repeated everywhere that one agent is bribed to silence about frauds by the contractors paying him \$13,000. The air is full of scandals, and the official investigator, amid repeated expressions of astonishment, disgust, and indignation, declares that the foul transactions shall be probed to the bottom and the thieves punished.

"10 P.M., 28th Jan., '42. To-day took down a number of statements in regard to issues of provisions, etc. Upon a hasty calculation from one statement of provision issues to seventy-eight persons for a whole year, it would seem that the issues and money together (for some money was paid) amounted to about \$5 for each individual. The government paid the contractors about \$45 for each!!!"

Not only the days of this winter but the nights also were given by the Major to the quest, and even Christmas Day and Sundays were employed in relentless activity. Instances were found where honest men, refusing to use false scales and measures, were summarily dismissed from the service of government agents and contractors. The investigation was pushed among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, and gross robbery was found to have been perpetrated against them all. In some parts of the

nation the Creeks were so hostile on account of the lying and cheating of the whites that the Indian men refused to wear pantaloons. "Why they make this difference," says the chronicler, "and wear coats and vests, I do not see." Probably they repudiated the bifurcated garment as the especial symbol of the crafty invader. In his researches Major Hitchcock became acquainted with many of the peculiar customs, beliefs, fetiches, and ceremonies of the people, and gives a detailed description of the official "round house" where the sacred fire was kept, and a minute account of the busk or green corn dance held every year in July and August. But he keeps an eye on business:

"10 A.M. Enehenathla, a chief, tells me that towards the close of the year one of the agents came to him and said, 'You have now raised corn and have enough to live on: you had better sell your rations claim.' There was three months' rations due, he says, and he and his people received \$1.50 each in money for each claim—only \$1.50 for three months' rations! Account:  $3 \times 30 = 90$  rations  $\times 12\frac{1}{2}$  cents \$11.25. So the contractors put into their own pockets \$9.75 for each!!!"

As a direct result of this cruel robbery whole families were swept off by starvation, and tribes, without arithmetic enough to know what they were doing or imagination enough to picture the needs of the future, allowed themselves to be decimated. The robbery by the government agents and contractors seems to have been universal within the range of inquiry: everywhere testimony was freely offered that only half or a quarter of the rations due were really received: everywhere there were forgery, substitution, false accounting, and the obtaining of "claims" under compulsion. There were twelve deaths in a year in four families. On every hand were given the details of peculation.

"It is a curious fact that the contractors were receiving in money over seven cents for each ration issued, besides receiving a ration in kind of the salt provision. This last was wanted and earnestly demanded by the Indians, but it was refused. They appealed to Chief Ross, and when Ross applied to the agents he was simply answered that the government had not ordered it. The Indians wanted salt meat, for the



fresh beef was so poor that many would not take it at all and others exchanged it for bacon under the hardest conditions,—the very bacon that had originally been bought by the government for these Indians!”

It was found that Indians had been cheated at wholesale by a fraudulent status of their claims; that the conductor of a steamboat carrying Chickasaws was urged to certify to 125 tons of baggage, and finally did certify to 75 tons, when there were not over 20 tons on board; that the “square box” in which the Indians’ corn was measured out was charged for half a bushel, but contained seven quarts less; that there was only a pair of small steelyards for weighing beef; that spoiled rations to the value of \$200,000 had been sold to the Chickasaws at one council; that beef cattle were issued at 800 or 900 pounds each which did not weigh 500; that dishonest contractors had paid large sums of money to government officers; that the claims of “incompetent” Indians and orphans had been bought up for a fraction of their value, and that horses had been sold to them at \$200 each that were not worth over \$30. In the treaties for the removal of some of the tribes, a certain class were deemed and declared “incompetent” to manage their share of money, and the government became a voluntary “agent” for the safety of it. “These,” says the diarist, “were more abused, that is, more cheated, than any others,” although they had been made by solemn treaty the wards of the United States government.”

“A generation ago the Chickasaws were almost as wild as the wild Indians west of the Cross Timbers. After a time they became industrious and ingenious in manufacturing a number of articles, particularly of cotton cloth. But since they have been in receipt of moneys from the sale of their lands east of the Mississippi River they have almost entirely given up both industry and art.

“The annuity to the Choctaws produces idleness and poverty on the whole. Is it not the same all the world over? Where the bounty of Nature has relieved a population from the need to labor, have they not lived for ages in sloth, with all its evils?—and is not the reliance upon annuities calculated to produce the same result? Is not wealth a dangerous



inheritance among ourselves, and infinitely less valuable than habits of industry?"

Some seventy pages of this voluminous diary are occupied in the last week of February, 1842, with a discussion of the condition of the Indians, with speculations as to how to promote their welfare, with a chronicle of rumors and proof of frauds perpetrated on them, and with a consideration of the details of a report to the War Department. The record is sometimes desultory and fragmentary.

"Change of habits—loss of old customs—general character of customs—not savage or sanguinary—simple and in some cases highly interesting—respect the aged and the dead—some punishments among the Creeks objectionable—cropping—no jails or penitentiaries, one reason—does n't work a loss of character to undergo punishment but restores character—hence Indians rarely attempt to escape punishment even extending to loss of life. No character survives a crime unpunished, but when avenged by the law the offender is restored. A cropped women may lead off the next dance and is all right. This is why women submit to law in India: if they do not, they are despised and had better die.

"The typical Indian is neither a hero nor a savage. The want of established law was the true origin of the Indian custom of taking life for life. The surviving friends of a murdered man will take the life of the murderer, if convenient; if not, they will sacrifice some near relation. But do not nations go to war against whole peoples when the individual aggressors are beyond reach? All who are related (in a clan especially) must answer for the conduct of each individual.

"In war the alleged barbarous cruelty of Indians admits of much extenuation. In a war of one entire tribe or people against another tribe or people it is the business of each to do the opposite party the greatest possible injury. Indians have no jails for the confinement of prisoners of war, and it is contended by many civilized nations that prisoners may rightfully be put to death when they dangerously weaken the party into whose hands they have fallen. Indians are always in that condition during war. The celebrated La Pucelle was burned alive by the Duke of Bedford.

"Persons have been put to death among the Indians for

the imaginary crime of witchcraft, but so they have been among our own recent ancestors. Occasionally human victims have been immolated at the shrine of superstition among the Indians; but so they were among the Greeks and Romans, and when Carthage was threatened with destruction by war she devoted to the flames at one time 200 children of noble birth. I do not hesitate to give the opinion that, for simplicity and innocence of manners and customs, the wild people of America may challenge comparison with any other people upon the globe.

“Under the general name of heathens they have commanded a vast deal of sympathy on the supposition that they were very miserable and devoted to eternal destruction hereafter. Immense efforts have been made to root out their beautiful illusion by which they expect, as a reward of good life, that their spirits shall enjoy unbounded felicity in the land of their forefathers, and to substitute—what?—rather a vile and contemptible fear of hell, instead of hope of heaven.

“By the way, I must not forget what was told me yesterday of the law passed in a Cherokee council about the killing of witches. The grave council took the subject of witchcraft into serious consideration and received testimony to the effect that witches had the power to pass into the bodies of owls and other animals, travel a long distance, do the mischief they had in hand, and then return to the human body. It was therefore solemnly decreed that it should be lawful to put to death any animal in which a witch subsisted, but it was forbidden to put to death a human being to kill the spirit of the witch. An exceedingly ingenious disposition of the matter. The council did not deny the common faith in witches, but rendered it perfectly innocent and innocuous. How much wiser this than the Salem folks!

“They fear that they will be defrauded of their annuities as they have been of their ‘incompetent’ claims. They are generally honest. No trader ought to be permitted to trade with Indians, except on his own responsibility and risk. His having traded on credit shall not of itself give him a right to enter the nation for the purpose of making collections. As a general rule, if he trades honestly the Indians will pay;



if they refuse payment, it is *prima facie* evidence of extortion and fraud on his part. I hear cursing in English, never in Indian. There is no oath in any Indian language I have ever heard of."

Major Hitchcock wrote to the Secretary of War (J. C. Spencer) in reference to Cherokee affairs on Dec. 21st, from Tallequah, and on Jan. 9th from Fort Wayne, and again from the same place on Feb. 10th, furnishing data for an indictment of the robbers. On Jan. 31st he was promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel of the 3d Infantry, stationed in Florida.

"Fort Smith, March 7. Arrived last evening and was made at home at Gen. Zachary Taylor's, my old Lieutenant-Colonel of the 8th Infantry, when I was Adjutant. Nothing can be more friendly than his reception of me.

"I might be flattered if I chose by an order from Washington, March 1st, received by General Taylor yesterday, directing precisely what I recommended to the Secretary of War by letter from Fort Wayne. Fort Wayne is ordered to be immediately abandoned and a new post established about a hundred miles south of Fort Leavenworth. The property at Fort Wayne is even ordered to be disposed of exactly as I recommended—portions sold and portions conveyed to Fort Gibson. I did not expect such complimentary and prompt action when I wrote expressing my sentiments."

At Fort Smith he met Capt. W. W. S. Bliss of his old regiment, serving the commander as Assistant Adjutant-General. Bliss was a student, and a thoughtful and scholarly man, and here the two resumed those discussions of Kant and Lessing and the ancient and modern philosophers which had previously served to make tolerable the tedium of frontier life. Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock also wrote repeatedly and with considerable detail to the Secretary of War. In less than a week he parted from his old friends again, "for Little Rock and then perhaps Washington." It is impossible to convey in these brief pages the impression given in the abundant diaries of his assiduous labor at this time. He was seldom in a place two days in succession. From camp to camp, from fort to fort, from Choctaw village to Cherokee, from house to house, he pressed everywhere his persistent



inquiries, made notes, took depositions, collected letters, copied documents, personal and official; was evidently close on the track of the robbers.

"Napoleon, Mouth of Arkansas River, March 16. Saw a boat in the distance going down the river. On landing here had the agreeable intelligence that two boats had but a few minutes before left for New Orleans. So I was here just in time to be too late. Maybe they'll blow up! The Rev. John Newton was once too late to join a boat-party of pleasure, and was quite grieved. But the boat was lost, the party drowned, and the Rev. John was convinced of a special interposition of Providence in his behalf! Now, I have not so much objection to this if those lost were admitted to be lost by the interposition of the same Providence. Dean Swift (in the *Tale of a Tub*, I think) sets off in fine style the conceit of those who fancy themselves distinguished as the special objects of Providential care. To say that God does this or does that, especially, implies that He does not do that or this. Now he does this and that and all things.

"Had hardly noted the above when I heard that a boat was coming down—the *Macedonian*, a large St. Louis steamer.

"Steamer *Macedonian*, March 16. On my way to Washington *via* New Orleans. Do not know a soul aboard and see no one I desire to know. Few passengers, and most of them around a table—my abomination, a card table—with tumblers on the corners. Retired to my state room and thought about infinity, etc. I deny that either hope or fear is or can be religion, whether it points to objects here or hereafter."

The diarist gives abundant evidence of being impressed with the appearance of the great river, full to its bank-tops and of almost limitless width,—here and there bursting through the levee and desolating the country. Notes also the shabby towns along its course and several times recurs to their dishevelled condition and to the wide-sweeping, aggressive, menacing river. But, as he finds no companions, he dwells mostly on metaphysics, philosophy and philosophers, religion, free will and necessarianism, man's duty and destiny, the real origin and utility of the Bible, which he spells with a small b, the essentials of religion, and comparisons between

the Christian creed and other creeds that preceded it. And of such contemplations he writes scores of pages, mostly in pencil, but with a careful indication of every letter, and with a firm, vertical stroke which renders the pencil writing, after more than half a century, as legible as when written.

For the subjective and introspective tendencies of his mind, and especially for often dwelling on religious subjects, he speaks apologetically, or, rather, explanatorily and defensively, as follows:

"Why should I not record my views of religion? The Christian hears a service on the first Monday of every month, usually three sermons every seventh day, and often prayers and sacred psalms every morning and evening, besides other occasions, as Christmas, etc., to say nothing of marriages, births, and deaths. And this is not only thought to be all right, but the neglect of it is condemned as sinful by most people. I find satisfaction in stating and reflecting upon the great doctrine of Pantheism, in which my mind becomes a part of the universe—of God Himself."

The diarist proceeds to consider the value of his own opinion or conviction on any question. He comes to the conclusion that if there are eight hundred million people in the world, the value of his belief to them is about as one to eight hundred millions, but its value to him is as eight hundred millions to one! And he goes on to say: "It is certain that all the arguments used against the free speech of infidels were once used against Wicliffe and the reformers—and more too, for in those days the state burned to death those who were 'infidel' to the state church. Toleration is the true law." The writer is moved by the majesty of the swollen river and the paucity and poverty of the people along its banks. Time glides dreamily by, and he forgets to record the day of the month and even of the week:

" $\frac{1}{2}$  past nine. Wooding 70 miles below Natchez. The banks of the river are beginning to look green. Trees are in leaf and present a very different appearance from that of three days ago in the Arkansas. Very warm. Air sultry."

Somewhat later: "I look at my watch. 'T is  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5 P.M. and I sharpen my pencil to note the exact time the boat turns from Baton Rouge and proceeds on her way.

I note this with utmost deliberation, and yet how I gaze at that place and seek familiar objects! The barracks are where, if not as, they were 20 years ago when I was on duty here."

The barracks were identifiable, but the voyager sought, without much success, to locate certain houses where, when he was a young lieutenant, he was often welcomed. He finds Baton Rouge, in most respects, "detested and detestable," but it presents ameliorations of this condition. He catches a glimpse of a house—it now looks "desolate and deserted"—where "a Spanish family of pretty girls lived"; there he "sometimes heard music—song, piano, guitar," and below were the woods through which the susceptible subaltern "sauntered many a time just because the beautiful Made-moiselle Duplantier lived there. She captivated me at a ball, I remember, but, as she spoke no English and I no French, I 'never told my love.' " In other weather-beaten dwellings, he remembers, lived Helen and Nancy and other pretty girls, and they stirred his fancy again on this spring day till Baton Rouge had faded, as they had, in the distance. Perhaps it was some of these unaccustomed reminiscences that moved him to add in his diary that afternoon, "I wish I were in the way of making a clear income of a thousand a year, for then I would resign from the army." He reached New Orleans March 22d, and proceeded towards Washington, pausing at Mobile to call upon the family of his late brother, Judge Hitchcock.



## CHAPTER XXII

THE SEMINOLE POCAHONTAS. INTERVIEW WITH MILLY FRANCIS. STRANGE AND ROMANTIC STORY. TOLD BY DAUGHTER OF THE FLORIDA PROPHET. HOW THE SACRIFICE OF THE WHITE YOUTH WAS PREVENTED. MCKRIMMON'S OFFER OF MARRIAGE REFUSED. DEATH OF THE PROPHET. DISTRESS OF MILLY. PENSION FOR THE HEROINE OBTAINED TOO LATE.

COLONEL HITCHCOCK'S visit to the Creeks and Cherokees, for the purpose of investigating frauds and exposing the criminals, was punctuated by an interview with Milly Francis, by this time widely known as "the heroine of the Seminole War." Captain John Smith's narrative of his adventures and "providential escape" through the romantic intercession of a brown princess of Virginia has been made the subject of much incredulous comment, but Milly Francis furnished a parallel instance more than two centuries later.

Colonel Hitchcock after a little inquiry discovered her living in poverty in the Southwest, heard the strange story from her lips, and induced Congress to pass a special law giving her a pension of \$96 per annum "as a testimonial of the gratitude and bounty of the United States for the humanity displayed by her in the War of 1817-18, in saving the life of an American citizen who was a prisoner in the hands of her people and was about to be put to death." The modern Pocahontas had descended from affluence to want, from happiness to misery, from a home to charity, but she was still distinguished among her dwindling and impoverished people for the strange vicissitudes of her life. For a quarter of a century her friends and neighbors had pointed her out as the Indian girl who had saved the life of an American officer. Here follows the narrative: The "prophet Francis" or Hilisajo, as he was

called among the Seminoles, lived near Fort St. Marks, on the Gulf of Mexico south of where now stands Tallahassee, and was one of the best known and most influential local chiefs. In the summer of 1815, he went to England with a British officer and created much enthusiasm, being received by the Prince Regent (George IV.) with great ceremony, given a commission as brigadier-general in the British army, and presented with a diamond snuff-box, a gold-mounted tomahawk, and a gorgeous uniform. A London paper of that time says, "A double flourish of trumpets announced the approach to his Royal Highness of the patriot Francis." It does not appear that the Prophet ever tried seriously to help Great Britain in the war then pending, for he came home the next year "determined to live at peace with the white man."

In the summer of 1817, a small party of Seminoles surprised and captured while fishing in the river one Captain Duncan McKrimmon, a member of the Georgia militia, and they made arrangements to sacrifice him at the stake near the home of Francis. The following is the story as told by Milly to Colonel Hitchcock—it is the same that Captain McKrimmon told all his life:

"Milly began by saying that an elder sister and herself were playing on the bank of the river, when they heard a war-cry, which they understood to signify that a prisoner had been taken. They immediately went in the direction of the cry and found a white man, entirely naked, tied to a tree, and two young warriors, with their rifles, dancing around him preparatory to putting him to death, as was their right according to custom. She explained to me that in such cases the life of a prisoner is in the hands of the captors—even the chiefs have no authority in the case. She was then but fifteen or sixteen years of age; 'the prisoner was a young man' said Milly, 'and seemed very much frightened and looked wildly around to see if anybody would help him. I thought it a pity that a young man like him should be put to death and I spoke to my father and told him it was a pity to kill him—for he had no head to go to war with' (meaning that he had been led off by others). 'My father told me,' continued Milly, 'that he could not save him, and advised

me to speak to the Indians. I did so. One of them was very much enraged, saying he had lost two sisters in the war and would put the prisoner to death. I told him that it would not bring his sisters back to kill the young man, and so, talking to him for some time, I finally persuaded him, and he said that if the young man would agree to have his head shaved, and dress like an Indian, and live among them, they would save his life.' She then proposed the conditions to the white man, which were joyfully accepted; and the Indians changed the contemplated death scene into a frolic. They shaved the young man's head, excepting the scalp lock, which was ornamented with feathers, and, after painting him and providing him an Indian dress, he was set at liberty and adopted as one of the tribe."

On the return of her father from England Milly received handsome presents of dresses, shoes, and bonnets and much unaccustomed finery, and learned to make graceful use of them. Captain McKrimmon paid suit to her and asked her to marry him, but she declined, saying: "I did not save you for that. I do not want any man." A young Englishman named Ambrister also applied for the hand of "the princess," as she was called by her English acquaintances, but she declined all offers. He lived only to perish at the hands of Jackson's hangman.

Parton's *Life of Jackson* says that a man named Rodgers, of Rock Island, Ill., who claimed to have been in the early Florida wars, has reported as follows:

"Just before General Jackson went to Florida in the spring of 1818, a ship came into the roadstead at St. Mark's flying the British colors conspicuously. Captain McKrimmon, having been informed of her sinister mission, rowed out to her and climbed aboard. Then more British flags were displayed, and shortly the two local chiefs who had sided with the British—the 'Prophet Francis' and his comrade Himollemico—paddled out in their canoe to visit the friendly ship. The captain welcomed them on deck and invited them into his cabin to 'partake of hospitalities.' They followed him without suspicion. A guard of American marines rushed out of their hiding-places and made them prisoners. Then they observed that in the cabin hung only American flags. The



ship was a trap, treacherously set under a false flag to catch the sympathizers with England.

"Soon Captain McKrimmon made his appearance before the prisoners. 'Ah!' said Francis, turning on him with dignified scorn, 'this is what I get for saving your life!'

" 'You did not save my life,' said McKrimmon, 'it was your daughter. I will do all I can to save you.'

"McKrimmon looking through a glass that afternoon discovered Milly paddling around the bay inspecting the ship and she was fired on from its deck. She seized a rifle from the bottom of the canoe and returned the fire."

The next morning Jackson arrived through the woods from the north. He had already written to Washington: "The Prophet Francis, now leading a band of slaves enticed from their masters, citizens of the United States, is exciting the Seminoles to hostility. . . . It is important that these men should be captured and made an example of." Here on the ship at St. Mark's he found the chief in his power, still wearing, when he was treacherously seized, the handsome British uniform that had been given him by the Prince Royal in London.

General Jackson seems to have been a cruel and inhuman commander. His conduct in Florida was as arbitrary and despotic as that of any czar who ever sat on the throne of the Romanoffs. He ruled in defiance of law. He invaded the territory of a king with whom we were at peace, captured his forts, drove off his armies, and executed alleged offenders without a shadow of authority. In all but name he was an emperor. He now took possession of the two chiefs who had been seized on the vessel, arrested also one Ambrister and a harmless middle-aged merchant named Arbuthnot, and caused all four to be hanged or shot as enemies of the United States!

To return to Colonel Hitchcock's interview with Milly: She had long since been married and had eight children. Her husband was dead. "I asked Milly how she lived," he says. "She told me that she was very poor and had to work hard. Her father was put to death in the war. Of eight children but three are living, too young to help. She is now about forty years old, and after having seen her and being entirely satisfied with the truth of her story I am induced to recom-

mend that the government grant a small pension for her support in her old age, in consideration of her extraordinary and humane act. A small pension (\$50 or \$75 a year) with a clear explanation of the grounds of its allowance may have a salutary influence on savage customs in future times. The Seminoles have possession of the negroes whom her father left her and she has been unable to reclaim them."

As the result of earnest solicitation and advocacy on the part of Colonel Hitchcock a bill granting a pension to Milly was favorably reported to the House of Representatives by the Indian Committee giving her \$96 per annum during life. The committee's report says: "The committee see a strong argument in favor of this dispensation of the bounty of the government, not only in the relief which it will afford to the immediate recipient whose conduct has so well deserved it, but also in the effect which it is calculated to produce by teaching the still uncivilized though gradually improving people to whom she belongs the virtue of humanity." The bill also provided that a gold medal should be struck and "transmitted to the said Milly, with appropriate devices thereon, as an additional testimonial of the gratitude of the United States."

Congress was dilatory, as usual, but the bill passed and was approved two years later, June 17, 1844. Then it took the administration four years more to issue her pension, and it finally reached her when she no longer needed it and was handed to her upon her dying bed in 1848.

## CHAPTER XXIII

PROMOTION TO LIEUTENANT-COLONELCY. EXPOSURE OF INDIAN ATROCITIES AND FRAUDS UNWELCOME TO ADMINISTRATION. CONGRESS DEMANDS REPORT. SECRETARY REFUSES TO FURNISH IT. HOUSES PERSIST. LONG BATTLE IN CONGRESS. SCOTT FURIOUS. ETHAN ALLEN'S DAUGHTER

“WASHINGTON CITY, April 5, 1842. Arrived *via* Charlseton, Wilmington, Weldon, Portsmouth, and Baltimore. Lord Ashburton arrived last evening. I have seen and been well received by the Secretary of War, Mr. Spencer, whom I never saw before. He says I must give him all the aid in my power in his negotiations with the Cherokees. And he is evidently well prepared to listen to my reports from the Southwest. Have had a friendly interview with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs—with General Scott, etc., etc.

“Have the official order for my promotion to be Lieutenant-Colonel.”

Early in April Colonel Hitchcock reported to the Secretary of War many facts showing that the government agent for the Chickasaws was oppressive and corrupt, and recommended his peremptory removal for cause. He also condemned several prominent contractors as entirely unworthy of government recognition.

“April 15th. Several days in Washington have convinced me that the Second Auditor is making attempts to screen Captain ———, from the effect of my examination in the Southwest. The first thing I noticed was a deception and in fact virtually a false report from his office in answer to a call of mine for information. He says that certain issues to the Chickasaws were for four years, while the true time



is nineteen months. The next circumstance is perfectly disgusting: General ——— Chief Clerk of the War Department, spoke to me on Monday, suggesting danger to Mr. Bell (late Secretary) if my report should affect ———, as Mr. Bell set on foot the investigation. He enlarged on the influence and power of the family in Tennessee. The next day he twice renewed the same theme and expressed again the very same words. He was emboldened to recur to it because I did not insult him when he dared to address me at first. I did not choose to show my indignation, but simply said that if my report should bring Mr. Bell and Captain ——— into conflict, I could not help it.

"I see also a marked change of manner in the Secretary of War, who seems to avoid conversation with me at the house where we both board. And the Indian Commissioner, Mr. Crawford, is full of 'possibilities' and 'probabilities,' in excuse of Captain ———: 'Indians can be made to say anything,' etc. I shall make my report without regard to anything or anybody but the facts."

"April 28, 1842. I have at length handed to the Secretary of War my report upon the manner in which the emigrant Indians in the Southwest were furnished rations in 1837-'40. I appended to it just one hundred documents and statements. The former are extracts from the contracts, etc.; the latter from persons in that country as to their execution. I show, I think conclusively, that whereas contracts had been given out down to 1836 at  $6\frac{5}{8}$  cents a ration and no contract over 9 cents, those given out after that date were  $9\frac{3}{10}$  cents and so up to 16 cents, with no sufficient necessity to justify it. For the execution of the contracts, I show that the Indians were cheated by false measures in furnishing corn and by false estimates in delivering beef on the hoof, and finally by the purchase of the claims of the Indians for 'a mere song.'"

The drastic recommendation to remove the favorite agent from office was supported by a "bushel of documents," furnishing, the Colonel believed, abundant proof of guilt. The administration, however, hesitated to charge its own party's officials with felonious acts, and adopted dilatory measures.

"May 20. I am told that the chairman of the Committee

on Indian Affairs, H. of R., has called for my report to the Secretary of War. This morning I talked with the Secretary about the matter. He says he will not furnish the report. There may be a squabble. Even impeachment is threatened."

"June 2. The House yesterday passed a resolution authorizing the Indian Committee to send for persons and papers on the subject of the frauds investigated by me in the Southwest. The Secretary of War yesterday sent the Committee a letter refusing to transmit my report. Now comes the tug."

"June 4. Secretary Spencer told me this evening that the House has to-day been in debate on his refusal to send my report. He has sent a letter giving his reasons for withholding it, and this refusal has to-day been the subject of violent discussion. He puts his refusal on the ground that the inquiries made by me were *ex parte*, and that it would be unjust to those implicated to publish the result. He says this evening that it has now become a question of principle, and the House shall not have the report without his heart's blood. I hope his motive for withholding it is good, but politicians are slippery bipeds. He knows, as well as any man can, that I conducted the investigation with perfect fairness. I am sure there is no appearance of partiality or bias of any sort."

"June 15. No action of the House yet on my report. I discover that the Secretary would rather have me out of the way. He has intimated as much, saying that they may summon me, and he does n't wish me to get into any difficulty with the House. His wife told me yesterday that she is urging the Secretary to appoint me Inspector-General of the Army."

The diarist records his opinion that "there are others" who would like to have him out of Washington. The Indian Commissioner tried to detain him on account of his familiarity with Indian matters, "but General Scott would rather have me away, although he and I 'shook hands.' (See *Gil Blas*.)"

On June 29th Secretary Spencer received a letter<sup>1</sup> from

<sup>1</sup> Here is an extract from it: "I beg pardon of the Secretary of War for these indignant remarks. Lieut. Col. Hitchcock is no doubt an officer of good general intelligence and of high capacity for certain kinds of business.



General Scott in which he spoke of Colonel Hitchcock with some exasperation. This the Secretary handed to the Colonel, who read it and returned it with the remark "I am little moved, knowing the true source of the General's feelings."

The letter ended with the announcement "I shall certainly send Lieut. Col. Hitchcock to his regiment in Florida the moment he is released from special duty under the immediate orders of the Secretary."

While waiting orders in Washington Hitchcock retires within himself again and finds time to indulge in those metaphysical speculations and introspections which had occupied so many of his leisure hours before the busy summer among the "emigrant Indians." He kept up a correspondence with Captain Bliss, the assiduous student and scholar who married the daughter of General Taylor and became his chief of staff. Bliss was about the only companion of high literary attainments that Hitchcock could claim, if he could claim as a companion in any sense one who was generally far away on the frontier. Together or apart they sympathetically discussed Hegel and Kant, Iamblichus, Goethe, and Carlyle, Locke, Glanville, and the philosophy of modern thinkers, especially of Germany—a philosophy, he says, which teaches "a faith freed, I hope, from the gross superstitions which give so many religions of the world a forbidding aspect." And then he illustrated with a quotation from a sermon by Jonathan Edwards.<sup>1</sup>

"The celebrated Knox once in a prayer," records the diarist, "asked forgiveness for the sin of not having persecuted sufficiently God's enemies."

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But he seems to have lost his military pride, and to think that the army would be an excellent place for him were it not for the soldiers!" Scott changed his mind four or five years later at the beginning of the war with Mexico.

<sup>1</sup> "The wicked will be destroyed in the view of the saints and other inhabitants of Heaven. When the Saints in Heaven shall look upon the damned in Hell it will prove to them a greater sense of their own happiness: the misery of the damned will give them a greater sense of the distinguishing grace and love of God to them that He should, from all eternity, set His love on them and make so great a difference between them and others who are of the same species and deserve no worse of God than they. When they shall look upon the damned and see their misery how will Heaven ring with the praises of God's justice towards the wicked and His grace towards the Saints!"



From private contemplation and reminiscence he always passed readily to public affairs. Observing what seems to have been a dim adumbration of the great Civil War of 1861, he writes (twenty years earlier):

"We are now tending to anarchy, and may find ourselves in civil war before many years.

"I have been much struck with the irregularities of the present Congress. Men with no talent or education seem to sway the whole body. . . . When I see fools legislating and disordering things, I say, 'Would it not be wiser to leave things to take their own course?' Then I look behind the said legislators, as it were, and say, 'Things *are* taking their own course—this is their own course.' "

Having reached this philosophical conclusion he several times appeared before the Finance Committee of the Senate and gave testimony concerning the pending bill "for the reduction of the army."

"Sunday, July 10. Have been in an excited and irritated state nearly all day. Flies exceedingly troublesome and vexatious. Will not be driven away. Light on me and return immediately after being brushed off. So, then, an immortal soul can be bothered by such a trifle.<sup>1</sup>

"I am in a delicate position—sustained here by the direct authority of the Secretary against the wishes of the General-in-Chief and despite his bitter and declared personal hostility."

Knowing that General Scott had declared his intention of ordering him to his regiment, "instantly," as soon as given authority over him by the Secretary, Colonel Hitchcock attempted to anticipate and forestall such action by suggesting it to the Secretary at their boarding-house—without the result expected, it would seem.

"I waited until after dinner when, seeing Mr. Spencer going up-stairs, I called to him and asked if he could spare me a moment.

"He stopped and turned around, saying, 'No, I cannot. I am going out to dinner and must dress immediately.'

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson says that swarms of flies from an adjoining stable tormenting the members of the Continental Congress hastened the signing of the Declaration of Independence!

"I tarried at the foot of the stairs and Mr. S. added, 'Is it anything requiring time?'

"I said, 'Oh, only a moment.' I went up the stairs to where he was standing and, taking the letter I had written out of my pocket, offered it to him, saying, 'I wish merely to say that, in case I am ordered to my regiment—' I was going to add that I wanted his authority to go to New York before setting out for Florida, to get some baggage there, but he gave me no time, and I suppose misapprehended me as intimating that some person other than himself had threatened to order me to my regiment, for he remarked quickly, abruptly, and almost angrily: 'You can't be ordered to your regiment. I want you here. You will obey nobody. You are under my orders! I cannot spare you!'

"These are as exactly his words as I could make them out. I said, handing him the letter, 'Will you take this, sir, and look at it?' As I turned away and descended the stairs he repeated that I was under his exclusive orders. Now I think I have placed myself in the proper position."

"July 28th. Still in Washington. Have had a most satisfactory conversation with the Secretary."

"The 3d Regiment has been ordered from Florida. This is all right, but it has created a tremendous excitement against me in the 8th. General Scott is furious. The thought of it almost makes me sick—not that I have been in the wrong, but it is so unpleasant to be engaged in any controversy. A General-in-Chief can raise a considerable stir with very little to go upon."

"Aug. 5. I begin to see daylight. The Secretary of War has furnished me a letter expressing his entire approbation of my course and complimenting me for my whole deportment with him."<sup>1</sup>

"11th August. The House has almost regularly every morning had the report of the Committee on Indian Affairs (touching Mr. Spencer's refusal to send my Indian report) under discussion during the morning hour these last ten or

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Spencer's long letter of approval ends as follows: "I cannot close this communication without bearing testimony to the propriety of your whole conduct since I have been acquainted with you, and particularly to the modest reserve which has on all occasions distinguished your deportment."



fifteen days. I have been an unconcerned spectator. If it is published those who are implicated will make a desperate assault on me. Since the General's assault I have felt almost unequal to standing up under the combined attack of the General-in-Chief and the friends of exposed rogues. I feel very much the want of an independent fortune that would enable me to defy the General himself and retire from the army. This is the greatest trial I have ever had. If I should tell the truth I should be first arrested and then court-martialled for disrespect to the General-in-Chief."

At last, on Aug. 13th, the House of Representatives passed by more than two to one three resolutions declaring that Congress had a right to "demand" from the executive Hitchcock's report to the Secretary of War and ended by "requesting" the President to furnish said report. But the matter dragged along and the diarist indicated in his entries that he was a good deal worried, and he again gave himself to philosophical meditations with the remark: "I find so little to interest me in the military profession that I had rather study or read books of philosophy. I fear I am not in my proper vocation—that is, I have read and studied myself out of it. The study of philosophy and my general reading have subdued all spirit for action and induced a wish to retire from the world into some solitude."

While suffering from this depression of spirits he started for Vermont, to revisit the home of his youth, and reached Burlington a little too late to attend the funeral of his mother, who died on Aug. 27th. Thus passed away, at the age of 75, the last of Ethan Allen's children by his first wife. She was a woman of great courage and independence of character, and there is abundant evidence that she fully appreciated the qualities of her son. In 1834, she wrote to him "Ethan, I have had many blessings. Among the first is the standing and character you have justly acquired. I am perfectly satisfied. 'Tis not fame and high sounding fame for some few deeds, but the uniform correctness of your life. Your character is formed to my liking." And still later she wrote him, on his return from the Seminole campaign, "My dear son: I have received your letter and am relieved, though sad for your great sufferings which I learn by the papers.



. . . I could expatiate in the common cant. I supposed you would be engaged and was pleased that you engaged as you did. Had it been your fate never to return still I should have said and felt that I was glad you volunteered as you did." Are not these the tones of the Spartan mother? A month or two before her death she wrote "We have had eulogies on your noble self from all our friends. Now I must be a wonderful woman to have such a son." The last time he saw her he wrote to his brother Samuel, "Her countenance is not altered at all since we left her, and it is the greatest satisfaction to find her mind preserve its equanimity and her conversation the vein of natural good sense and cheerfulness that always characterized it. She is every way a remarkable woman, worthy to be the daughter of Colonel Allen."

For his great services in the Revolution Congress voted Ethan Allen a valuable land grant, but the family did not avail themselves of it, and, the time authorizing its entry having expired, the deed of gift was left, at his daughter's death, among the unavailable assets of his bequest.

"At last General Worth reports 'a thorough pacification of Florida.' How? By doing precisely that which was so urgently recommended nearly two years ago by myself, first to Mr. Poinsett, Secretary of War, and then to Mr. Bell, his successor. Worth was chosen to supersede Armistead, chiefly by my urgent argument, that he might carry out this very policy. He has 'pacified' the Indians probably in the precise manner I suggested, after nearly two years of additional and expensive war costing twenty million dollars. And now he is made Brigadier-General for it! This almost makes me exclaim against the humbug of the world!"

## CHAPTER XXIV

FLORIDA UNPACIFIED. HOSTILE REMNANT OF SEMINOLES.  
DEATH TO ALL WHO AGREE TO EMIGRATE. GENERAL  
WORTH'S DILEMMA. HITCHCOCK RECALLED. FRIENDLY  
OVERTURES TO CHIEF PASCOFA. PERSUASION CONQUERS.  
CONGRATULATIONS FROM WORTH. WAR "AGAIN ENDED."  
THANKS OF GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

FLORIDA did not stay pacified, even after its "thorough pacification." In eastern Florida the Seminoles had either allowed themselves to be removed or had retreated to the vast and mysterious Okechobee swamp, where their descendants still hunt and fish and maintain peaceful intercourse with the whites on the borders of the Everglades. But in western Florida the camp-fires of the "runaway Creeks" from Georgia still lighted up the marshes, their canoes still commanded the Ocklocknee and Choctawhatchee, and their war-whoop still startled the sparse settlements around Tallahassee. They were not very numerous, being estimated at "40 warriors," but they were very aggressive and sanguinary. Their hiding-places in the immense swamp-wilderness were almost inaccessible to white men. From these jungles they would sally forth and suddenly make warlike excursions into the white settlements and as suddenly retreat to their ambuscade, leaving death and ashes in their path. They plundered and murdered with almost entire impunity, scarcely ever allowing themselves to be seen, but committing their depredations in the shortest possible time and flying again to their fastnesses.

The Southern Indians not only refused to go to Arkansas or to make a treaty of any kind as long as it could be avoided, but they pitilessly enforced one of their "laws" punishing

with death any Indian who proposed emigration. "As an illustration of this fierce spirit," writes the diarist, "during the past winter an Indian woman was sent out from one of our posts to invite Coosa Tustenugga's band to a conference with a view to emigration. The woman was taken and put to death, and her body cut in pieces, 'to freshen up the laws,' as the chief explained to his people."

On more than one occasion, in alleged retaliation, they intercepted stages and robbed and murdered the passengers, rendering all travel perilous and difficult. Finally, on Aug. 31, 1842, a party of these hostile Creeks attacked the residence of a Mr. Perkins, near Holmes's Valley, Washington County, and murdered the whole family in reprisal for injuries claimed to have been received from the whites of the vicinity. The settlers were in terror and many left the country. These facts were widely published, to General Worth's chagrin and discomfiture. The State militia, taking the trail, failed to find a single Indian in all this region, and finally Governor Call appealed to the President of the United States. In this dilemma General Worth answered the appeal of the Secretary of War by calling upon Hitchcock to join the 3d Regiment, still in western Florida, of which he had been made Lieutenant-Colonel, and "clear out the Indians," and, if possible, destroy<sup>1</sup> them. He accepted the duty as he understood it, and resolved to remove them without the shedding of blood — for he believed that was the only wise way to deal with so-called savages. His headquarters were to be at Fort Stansbury, twelve miles south of Tallahassee.

Diary: "I have been much with Indians and look upon them as a part of the great human family, capable of being reasoned with and susceptible of passions and affections which, rightly touched, will secure moral results with almost mechanical certainty. I repeatedly urged Mr. Poinsett, when he was Secretary of War, to voluntarily assign to the Indians some small part of Florida, and they would soon be willing to go West. One reason why the Indians would not surrender is that they were under the impression that

<sup>1</sup> The government does not seem to have contemplated taking any prisoners or sparing any women or children, as the Secretary of War directed him to "pursue, capture, *and* destroy these Indians."



they would be killed if they did so. Years of bloody pursuit of them makes it absolutely necessary to give them assurance of protection and security. . . . Even if the war was originally unavoidable, which I do not believe, there have been many lives and at least ten million dollars wasted to pay for a ridiculous pride in warring against a handful of abused savages."

Colonel Hitchcock left New York on Sept. 10th to rejoin his regiment in Florida, pursuing the following route: "To Pittsburg, 4 days; to the Cumberland, 5 days; to Nashville, 4 days; remained 5 days; to New Orleans, 6 days; to Mobile, 1 day; Choctawhatchee, 3 days; Tallahassee, 2 days; = 30 days altogether." Railroad to Harrisburg; canal-boat to Holidaysburg along the Juanita; cars over the mountains, "5 planes up and 5 down, some of them  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile long"; canal-boat again to Pittsburg; steamboat to Marysville; stage to Lexington; stage to Nashville; stage (120 miles) to Huntsville, Ala.; wagon (100 miles) to Elyton; wagon to Montgomery; stage to Macon and Tallahassee.

This traveller seems to have carried a library with him everywhere and to have lived with it amid all conceivable inconveniences. On this varied journey he read the plays of John Webster, an almost forgotten contemporary of Shakespeare, and a philosophical treatise of Toland; Plotinus and Glanville's *Consuetudinibus Angliæ* (12th century); the curious works of De Beauvais Priault and the *Defence of Pythagoras*; mitigated the discomforts of the miserable Ohio steamboat by lengthy quotations in his diary from the *Novum Organum*, and seasoned the grandeurs of the Alleghanies with comments and meditations on Gibbon and Carlyle and the *Institutes* of Menu. The descriptions and reflections of this tiresome zig zag journey occupy two diaries of a hundred pages each.

Colonel Hitchcock reached Florida about the 10th of October, paused at Fort Gamble, and was dined and entertained by old friends. Proceeded to Fort Hamilton and Fort Pleasant and thence to Fort Stansbury. Inspected the 3d Infantry. "Much as I have been absent from soldiers my experience on duty with cadets has left its effect upon me, and I would to-morrow drill a regiment with any field

officer in service. My voice is clear and my manner entirely free from impatience." His own opinion thus frankly expressed to himself is abundantly corroborated by the voluntary testimony of all his military comrades. As a tactician and disciplinarian he probably was without an equal during these years, and he brought every regiment with which he was connected up to a high efficiency. A visiting officer said, "It is a delight to see Hitchcock handle his men." The Colonel of the regiment, Many, was an invalid, and absent for years.

The camp of the 3d Infantry was pleasantly situated and was soon converted into a cantonment, disposed in a parallelogram, embracing ample space for parades and exercises. These were pursued so energetically that the regiment was carried through a complete course of instruction and was so perfected in drill as to attract much attention for years, extending even to its service in Mexico.

"There is something indescribably solemn and grand in the moaning of the wind through the tall pines among which my post is situated—like the sounds when the tremendous ocean broke upon the beach at Mobile Point. I am here a little while in this infinite scene. Men mistake in supposing their relative notions to be absolute. As in astronomy there is no up or down, over or under, so in morals our feelings are relative to human sentiment, and absolutely, that is to God, all things are equal."

"Fort Stansbury, Nov. 28, 2 P.M. Received an order an hour or two ago to reopen the war which has been closed so often. I am to operate westward. General Worth must be greatly disappointed, having obtained his brevet rank on the public presumption (based on his reports) that the war was indeed finally and for the last time ended."

This sarcasm was amply justified by the circumstances. The Florida war dragged on through two decades, accompanied by false reports and the making and marring of reputations; in fact, at the end of the twenty years, when the most formidable chiefs had been for a long time dead, the Seminoles, like a favorite prima donna, continued to make "positively the last appearance."

While waiting for a boat to take him and his command to



the field to find the chief Pascofa, Colonel Hitchcock dwelt much with the ancient and modern philosophers and filled no less than twenty-two pages of his diary, after receiving orders to move, with comments on Plotinus and Proclus, Daniel, William Miller, Lord Chatham, St. Paul, Mahomet, Jo Smith, and other alleged organizers and co-ordinators of human thought.

Colonel Hitchcock left Fort Stansbury Dec. 9, 1842, to "end the Seminole War" once more. He carried with him Plotinus, and the four volumes of John Paul Richter's *Hesperus*,—what other books the diary does not reveal. His plan was to make friendly advances, to invite the hostiles in, and induce them to vacate the country. To this end he sent forward scouts with amicable messages. The result seemed doubtful, for Colonel Davenport with the whole of the 1st Infantry, Captain Hutter, with a portion of the 6th Infantry, and Captain Bullock, with the dragoons, had recently operated against the hostiles from this point and had totally failed. The fugitive Creeks remained a menace to the settlers and eluded capture. Hitchcock records in his diary that he felt deeply the delicacy of his position. He knew that he could accomplish nothing with the use of a military force as such, for that method had failed again and again. At the same time he knew that if an attempt to reach and remove the Indians by a pacific invitation should fail it would seriously compromise his military reputation. To add to his embarrassment, two companies of local volunteers, authorized by the Secretary of War, had been raised and officered, and the captains now reported for duty and asked to be mustered in. As he had resolved to make the expedition a test of peaceful methods he dismissed the captains and their companies, simply telling them he would send for them when needed.<sup>1</sup>

He then detailed two companies from his own regiment,

<sup>1</sup> When Colonel Hitchcock was making his preparations to head off Pascofa's band, again threatening the borders of Georgia, he received a rather discouraging letter from Capt. Joseph E. Johnston, Worth's Adjutant-General, under date of Dec. 2, 1842, with the following advice: "General Worth wishes your measures to be, at present, purely defensive, without attempts to find the Indians." But Hitchcock felt that this was not at all what he had again been sent to Florida for, and he acted accordingly.



marched them to the Chattahoochee River, and there went on board of a little steamer and started down the Apalachicola in search of the hostiles. He had brought two "friendlies" and now told them that he was on a mission of peace. He directed them to go into the woods and advance and look about till they found an Indian—any Indian—and induce him to return with them to the steamer, at a place called Fort Preston,<sup>1</sup> under promise that he should not be detained a moment against his will: that the officer wished to talk with him, and if he did not like the talk he should be free to go at any time. They started out and were absent two days. At the end of that time Colonel Hitchcock's ears were saluted with a joyful whoop, which he knew was not an Indian yell. The friendlies came in bringing a shy and frightened Seminole. He was not more than twenty and looked as if he had carelessly and foolishly put himself into the white man's power.

Hitchcock took him by the hand, reassured him, had food brought him, and gave him a seat by his side. He inquired of his young guest about his people and their chief, and finally ended the conference by feeding him again, and asking him to go into the swamp and find his chief, Pascofa, and ask him to come in and have a friendly talk, assuring him that he should be free to go at any time. The "powwow" at last succeeded. The Indian went out on his important mission and returned in two days, saying that Pascofa would come in two or three days more.

The promise was kept. Three Indians<sup>2</sup> came in during the next day and Pascofa arrived a day or two later. He was bold and walked straight into the white man's presence.

Hitchcock took the chief outside the camp, and sat down on a log with him, accompanied only by the interpreter,

<sup>1</sup> This has apparently now no place in Florida geography, though two towns on the Apalachicola are named after Hitchcock's chief guides, probably,—Sampson and Ochesees,—and the bank of the Ocklocknee where Pascofa's band at last embarked is, or was, locally known as Hitchcock's Bluff.

<sup>2</sup> "The three Indians who came in to-day are young and likely-looking fellows. I had coffee for them and left them breakfasting or dining, as the case may have been. After they had eaten as much as would satisfy six men they stopped. Somebody asked if they had eaten enough. 'Yes,' said the negro Sampson, 'but dey begin again soon.' Indians never fully satisfy themselves while anything remains to be eaten."

and they had a long friendly talk. Pascofa was made to understand that his band had become isolated and could never have a day's peace while it remained in the country. His mind was also disabused concerning the land destined for his tribe. Hitchcock used no duress nor a threatening word. Pascofa became perfectly calm and mild and ended by saying that he would go if his people would agree to it. He would consult them and come in next day with ten warriors, with certain specified ceremonies. He then returned to the swamp after shaking hands and eating something.

The next day Pascofa was descried outside the camp with ten others with quills in their hair and armed with rifles. These they discharged among the trees, as an assurance that their purpose was peaceful. They came in singing. "I met them in the centre of the camp at the head of my officers, and we shook hands and exchanged 'talk'—rejoicing that peace was now made."

Hitchcock then invited all the Indians out into the woods, where he sat down with them and talked, with the assistance of the interpreter. All went well. The Indians expressed pleasure at their treatment and the friendly disposition of their white entertainer. Presents were given to them. They soon shook hands all around, had a smoke together, and the Indians left camp, agreeing to return in three days with their people.<sup>1</sup>

"Pascofa told me this morning that he was so happy at the prospect of peace that he could not express himself. 'Been rained on for years,' he said, 'but the sun is now shining.' He says they are all destitute. Three of his people out hunting: must wait till they come in, and then he will go from the country. . . . His warriors are wretchedly dressed, mostly in skins, with very dirty tattered shirts. One or two had bits of blankets about them. They generally hunt with bow and arrow."

<sup>1</sup> The diarist records: "Much anxiety as to whether the Indians will keep their contract. Pascofa has received the consideration in liquor, for he sent in a doe-skin entire, which I filled with liquor at his request. If he fails to perform his part of the agreement I shall feel at liberty to take possession of him, if he gives me a chance, and compel him to send a runner for his people. The camp is full of speculation. If I am compelled to seize Pascofa he shall never touch ground again short of Arkansas."



Christmas Day of 1842 was very quiet in the camp on the Apalachicola. The three days passed and the pledge had not been kept. On Dec. 29th several “braves” came in and reported that the families were slowly approaching. Hitchcock invited them on board of the boat as they arrived, to make passage to the mouth of the river. This they declined, saying frankly that they had committed such depredations along the river that their lives would not be safe; but if the Colonel would furnish them with some provisions and take the steamer around to Ocklocknee Bay, some thirty or forty miles, they would all make their way through the swamps and meet him there. To this he consented, but consented very reluctantly, fearing that it was a ruse to get rid of him, and started down the river without them, accompanied only by a guard of twenty men. His two companies were sent back to Fort Stansbury.

At Apalachicola the quartermaster bought “some calico, ribbons, needles and thread, and a few knickknacks for presents when we shall meet again,” and the steamer proceeded to the Gulf of Mexico and went around to the rendezvous, the mouth of the Ocklocknee, arriving two days later. New Year’s Day. Not an Indian was in sight.

Great anxiety prevailed for days lest the Indians might not keep their agreement to come out to the coast. Canoes were sighted along the shore and river. On Jan. 8th Hitchcock turned the steamboat’s prow up the Ocklocknee. At that time no white man had ever attempted to settle on this river or bay, and the character of the region was unknown. The boat might be going into an ambushade. Days passed, and no Indians. A row-boat was one morning sent up the river and returned in the afternoon with an Indian. It proved to be Pascofa himself. “He stepped on board,” says the diarist, “with every appearance of having kept good faith, and apologized for the delay, which he attributed to the slow movement of families, and to the fact that his canoe, hidden in a creek, had become imbedded in the sand and had to be dug out in a damaged condition.” Soon the people all arrived, and Pascofa said as they were quitting Florida forever they must have a good-bye dance on the river bank.

“I went with him to his camp—a strange and memorable



scene. A few fires in the thick woods with some fifty Indians around them. They had a dance, in which my officers joined. Pascofa looked on as chief and insisted on my sitting by his side. He constantly talked of his happiness that peace had come and frequently spoke of me as having ended the war. They are badly dressed, the blankets I have given them just covering their nakedness, and seem haggard and poor. Lieutenant Henry has issued a blanket to each and a shirt and turban to each man and a calico dress and handkerchief to each woman, food, &c."

The next day they were all on board the boat *William Gaston*, and dropped down to the mouth of the river. A letter came from General Worth congratulating Hitchcock on the success of his expedition. It had been assumed that these Indians would never be caught alive and that hostilities would be commenced. Great was the joy of Fort Stansbury. The Indians named Hitchcock, their peaceful captor, *Pa-ga-chu-lee*—"the Controlling Spirit."

"I have succeeded quite beyond my hopes. Gen. Worth says I have saved the government \$50,000, and when he heard of my success he exclaimed in his joy, 'I 'll jump overboard!' An army officer tells me that he exclaimed, 'By——! He has done it.' . . . On nearing the wharf and seeing the people, the Indians had a revulsion of emotion and seemed to feel that they were now indeed in our power. The men became perfectly silent and serious—sad—while the women were nearly all in tears. I took occasion to speak to them, telling them not to lose heart, as they were coming among friends who would take care of them; that I was glad to see that they had tender hearts, but they would be treated well. The chief, Pascofa, himself was so much affected that his lips trembled and he could not say a word. A woman stood near with a little child in her arms, and I told her that they had been living more like wild animals than like human creatures, and she could now bring up her children in peace and safety. At this she dropped her head and burst into tears. There is a story current that at one period the members of this band put their children to death to avoid the chance of their exposing the hiding-places by their cries, and also to make flight easier. It is remarked that there is no child among them

from four years old to about fourteen. This seems almost a confirmation of the story of terrible necessity to which they were reduced. But now the Indian War is finished—ended—closed for the last time. The Indians have been talked out of Florida.

“By a little show of kindness, which is very easy to show when it is felt, I have won Pascofa’s heart as I did Coocoochee’s two years ago. When Coocoochee, in presence of Worth, put his hand on my shoulder and called me his brother, the Colonel smiled it off gracefully, but he was annoyed and wished me to the devil.”

Colonel Hitchcock now turned the command over to junior officers who conducted the party to Arkansas. The *Apalachicola Journal* congratulated the settlers that their dangerous foe had been disposed of “in the incredibly short time of three weeks” and Governor Call issued a message to the Senate and House of Representatives which was as follows:

TALLAHASSEE, 13 January, 1843.

I have the satisfaction to announce that I have just received a letter from Lieut. Col. Hitchcock of the United States Army, communicating the gratifying intelligence of the complete success of his late expedition against the fugitive Creek Indians. After encountering difficulties and delays which could only have been overcome by the energy and perseverance of that gallant officer, on the morning of the 10th inst. the entire number of that savage band, which has so long harassed our frontier settlements, was induced to embark on the Ocklocknee, on board the steamboat which has already transported them to Cedar Keys, whence, it is believed, they will be immediately shipped to Arkansas.

The result of this enterprise will be a memorable event in the history of the Seminole War. <sup>1</sup>It has been attended with more complete and signal success than any other expedition conducted against the savage enemy. All apprehension of danger is now removed—not an Indian remains. The last war-whoop has been heard on our southwestern border and peace and security are permanently restored in that quarter.

Governor Call closed by recommending the passage of a

<sup>1</sup> “I feel it my duty to convey to the General the high sense I entertain of the zeal and singleness of purpose to accomplish the object, which have actuated both the officers and men of this expedition.”—Official report of Hitchcock.



resolution of thanks to Colonel Hitchcock, and the recommendation was at once acted upon.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Hitchcock now attended a court-martial at Palatka and wrote the finding of the court. Left on Feb. 5th for western Florida again—*via* St. Augustine and St. Mary's to Savannah by boat, and thence by railroad towards Macon.

"The only passenger on the train. Have the entire steam apparatus to myself. The country wears a desolate aspect. Such white men! What right have they to own negroes? The Bey of Tunis, 't is said, has liberated all the slaves in his dominions. How long can slavery remain an institution of this country?"

After 152 miles of rail and then fourteen hours in a wagon, he arrived at Macon and called on the mayor. "Ostensibly to pay my respects." From Macon to Tallahassee in a wagon. Reached Fort Stansbury, his headquarters, on Feb. 16th. Orders were received to concentrate the regiment there, and this was at once done, "four companies in log huts and six in tents."

On March 7th and 8th Governor Call gave a party and a dinner "in honor of Colonel Hitchcock and his gallant officers." Several hundreds attended. The Governor's toast at dinner was "Beauty and Chivalry—the pride and glory of our coun-

<sup>1</sup> In 1866 General Hitchcock looked over this record in his diary and added these reminiscences and explanations: "I never did believe in Harney's method of dealing with the Indians—to hang them wherever they were found—but in friendly overtures. It was on my recommendation that Worth was appointed to succeed Armistead, to put my policy into practice. I wrote the order. Worth, however, was not true to the principles he had approved of. He so conducted himself as to forfeit the confidence of the Indians before he tried the amicable method. His expedition cost a great deal of money and resulted in nothing. After a while he succeeded in seizing some Indians he himself had invited within his guards and they were sent out of Florida, whereupon 'the end of the war' was proclaimed and, through the influence of Scott, Worth was brevetted a Brigadier-General. When another outbreak occurred in western Florida, the Secretary of War ordered Worth to punish the Indians by a military expedition. Worth sent the order to me and told me to go ahead in my own way. I did not hesitate. I dispensed with two companies of volunteers and took two from my own regiment, thus saving a large amount of money. I succeeded in getting the Indians into my confidence and my camp, and by friendly talk alone induced them to do as I desired. Worth never acknowledged my services. Scott ultimately recognized and did all in his power to honor me and prove his fidelity to me."



try." Hitchcock responded with "Beauty—its defence and protection the noble privilege of Chivalry, whether with or without the button,"—thus including citizens among the chivalrous.

On March 15th General Worth arrived and reviewed the 3d Infantry. Colonel Hitchcock records: "The regiment to-day manœuvred admirably. I am certain Worth has not seen movements better executed these many years—not even in his own regiment."

"Last evening I attended meeting and heard a Mr. Somebody tell us 'Now 's the time!' and he seemed to make it clear that God was standing by waiting with the utmost concern and anxiety to have us all take the chance, as we might never get another. What blasphemies these people unconsciously utter!"

Orders came from Washington on March 20th to transfer the regiment to Jefferson Barracks, ten miles south of St. Louis. Before leaving, the regiment gave a largely attended banquet and dance to Governor Call and his friends at Tallahassee.

On April 4 (1843), Hitchcock left Fort Stansbury with his regiment and embarked for Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Reached New Orleans ten days thereafter,<sup>1</sup> and Jefferson Barracks on April 22d.

<sup>1</sup> The New Orleans *Picayune* joyously heralded the arrival at that city and added: "With infinite skill, perseverance, and good management the efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock were crowned with success in the short space of three weeks. The credit the gallant Colonel gained in this must be considered very flattering, as it was understood that Pascofa's band had sworn they would never come in."

## CHAPTER XXV

STRANGE STORY OF LOST "POLLY." HELPLESS WANDERER IN  
THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY. ESCAPE FROM THE HALTER.  
ASTRAY FROM THE POTTAWATOMIES. HITCHCOCK'S CA-  
TECHISM SAVES THE DERELICT AND SENDS HER HOME

DURING his final successful effort to close the Florida War Colonel Hitchcock was a party to a strange and pathetic episode. One morning he was surprised to receive a note from the Governor of Florida informing him that the settlers along the Apalachicola had encountered a wandering Indian woman who had been in their neighborhood for months, and refused to give any account of herself, and asking him to send troops to see if there was not a band of Indians still concealed thereabouts. Colonel Hitchcock believed the last suggestion entirely unfounded, but he sent an intelligent officer with one man and a led horse to bring in the wanderer. The diarist continues the curious story as follows:

"The officer returned with the woman in the course of a week, the distance going and coming being about 180 miles. He reported that he, also, had been unable to extract a word from the woman that could be understood. He found her surrounded by frightened white settlers who called her 'Polly.' In their alarm they had put a rope around the neck of the poor creature, and threatened to hang her if she did not give some account of herself. All that the woman did in response to the threats was to burst into tears and cry incessantly. In her clothes were found two or three curious papers. One, dated 'Jefferson C'ty, Mo.', was signed by one Wilcox, who stated that the woman called Polly appeared to be of the Choctaw tribe and that she seemed to be harmless and that he recommended her to the kind assistance of everybody,

that she might be helped to reach her tribe. Another, dated at Yazoo City, Miss., stated that the woman was unknown, but apparently honest, and the writer commended her to the kindness of all who should meet her.<sup>1</sup>

"As there was in Upper Florida a Monticello, in Jefferson County, the 'Mo.' in the first paper was thought to stand for that town and the abbreviation 'C'ty' for 'county.' The people of that place were inquired of, but none of them ever heard of the lost woman.

"She was thirty-five or forty years old, and was dressed in a plain calico gown, quite unlike the wild Indians of Florida, and when not spoken to she was perfectly quiet and seemed not to notice anybody or anything. Feeling that it was necessary to locate her where she belonged, I sent several miles and got a skilful interpreter, acquainted with all the Southern Indian languages. He spent some time questioning her, but, after doing his best, he declared to me that he did not know what she was saying and could make nothing of her. I was astonished and nonplussed, and reported her case to General Worth. He declined to give any orders, and left it

<sup>1</sup> Here are literal copies of some of the papers:

"Yazoo Valley, Nov. 6, 1842—as all men Danote under stain the Language of an Indians I take the Libty of informing all men whar the indian Polly wants to go she is on her way to the chocktaw nation. She has good papers but is afraid to sho them to ever Boddy. polly cant speak English a tall."

"Poor lost Indian. Polly. she has good recommendation to be honest and offensive. and wants to get to Mississippi give the poor thing something to eat god will reward you."

"The Bear of this is a very civil Choctaw woman named Polly. She is on her way to her people. Please be kind and point out the road & assist her on her way. She is honest. Please feed her on her way."

"This is said to be a Seminole woman lost from her own people. She is inefencive she is a poor human being. She seems to be in trouble. I do not know where Polly wants to go. Hav compassion on him god will reward you."

"This old woman wants to go to the Choctaw tribe will all be kind enough to point out the road and give her something to eat. Let us have compassion on the poor Indians. God will reward us."

This last certificate was thus endorsed: "This old lady is not of the Chocktaw tribe for I speak the Chocktaw language and she cannot understand me.—"M. M. HANCOCK."



to me. We fixed her up a place to sleep and gave her rations—the only help I could think of.

“One day it occurred to me I would try some experiments with her, and I sent for her. When she was brought to my quarters I pointed to the fire and asked her, by gestures, what she called that. She answered distinctly ‘Scota.’ Now I had been so long on duty among the Northwestern Indians that I had learned something of the Chippewa language and at once recognized her ‘scota’ as the Chippewa word for ‘fire.’ I tried her on several other familiar things and recognized several other names as being Chippewa. I took a sheet of paper and began writing out the words, the woman’s face brightening up at once and showing by every sign that she perfectly understood what was going on.<sup>1</sup>

“After thus writing a dozen or more Chippewa words I sent to the kitchen for a piece of bread, and asked her what it was. She called it ‘*quash-con.*’ Here was a deviation. The Chippewa for bread is ‘*po-quash-e-kun.*’ It flashed across my mind that the woman was not pure Chippewa, but, as dialects of the Chippewa are spoken by nearly all the Northwest Indians, including the Crees, the Assineboins beyond the tribe, and the Sacs and Foxes, Winnebagoes, Menomenees, and Pottawatomies south of the tribe, I concluded (in spite of the great difficulties which it suggested) that the woman must belong to the Pottawatomies, who had made some progress in civilization on the shores of Lake Michigan before emigrating further west.

“So certain had I become of this that, a few months later, when I was ordered to Jefferson Barracks, Mo., I took the

<sup>1</sup> In the diary are recorded the following words which Hitchcock took down from her lips, according to their phonetic sound. But as he made no pretence to being an ethnologist, as he had never studied Chippewa, and as he made this record with no expectation it would ever be printed, it is not to be supposed that these words agree literally with a scientific vocabulary:

knife	<i>ku-ma.</i>	eye	<i>os-kish-ka.</i>
blanket	<i>wa-po-ya.</i>	hair	<i>win-sis-sa.</i>
red blanket	<i>mosqua-po-ya.</i>	comb	<i>mus-qua.</i>
beads	<i>nim-k-maw.</i>	water	<i>mish.</i>
mirror	<i>o-hawk-ma.</i>	pipe	<i>o-poi-gun.</i>
hand	<i>nutch-e-ma.</i>	tobacco	<i>sa-ma.</i>
nose	<i>tscha-se-ma.</i>	duck	<i>she-she-be.</i>
	dog	<i>an-a-moose.</i>	

lost woman with the regiment. But, all the way, I kept asking myself, 'If this poor castaway belongs to the Pottawatomie tribe, how on earth came she in the woods of Florida?'

"On reaching our destination near St. Louis I explained the strange case to Mr. Pierre Chouteau, a famous Indian fur-trader and son of the founder of St. Louis, and he agreed to send her in one of his trading-boats a thousand miles up the Missouri, to where the Pottawatomie tribe had settled years before, he promising to bring her back if the guess was wrong.

"It proved to be right! On the return of the expedition a few months later, I was rejoiced to hear that the poor wanderer had rejoined her friends and that, in fact, she was a sister of Wabunsa, one of the chiefs of the tribe.

"The story brought back was that, while a party of the Pottawatomies were emigrating westward through Missouri, this woman was missed one morning after a march of several miles. Two young men were sent back in search of her, but she had wandered off the road and was given up as lost. After leaving the trail she must have wandered in the direction of Jefferson City, where she met the humane Mr. Wilcox, on whose recommendation some equally kind river captain, supposing her to belong to the Choctaw tribe, had given her passage down the river to Yazoo, as the nearest point to what had been the Choctaw country. From there she must have strayed—the Lord knows how—several hundred miles east and south, until she was captured in the Florida wilderness and threatened with instant death as belonging to a dangerous band of marauding Indians on the Apalachicola! I have often gratefully thought that, if I had not happened to know a few Chippewa words, she might have wandered on and on, a harmless derelict, till she died of grief and starvation or became a victim to some party of enraged and ignorant settlers."

## CHAPTER XXVI

IN THE DOLDRUMS AT JEFFERSON BARRACKS. VISIT OF MARSHAL  
BERTRAND. ADVICE TO A YOUNG LIEUTENANT. THE FIND-  
INGS IN THE BUELL COURT-MARTIAL. ORDER OF SECRETARY  
DISOBEYED AND DEFIED. PRESIDENT SUSTAINS THE COURT  
AND ITS "PENMAN." A MOVE TOWARDS MEXICO. GEN-  
ERAL TAYLOR ASSUMES COMMAND AT FT. JESUP. DIS-  
SOLUTION OF UNION PREDICTED.

THE next diary, of a hundred compactly written pages (from April 4 to July 9, 1843), is wholly occupied with a chronicle of uneventful pleasant days in St. Louis, of military amenities, social diversions, philosophical reflections, and personal reminiscences.

"Jeff. Bks., Sept. 26. Yesterday I called on Napoleon Bonaparte's *aide de camp*—the famous Marshal Bertrand—at the Planters.' Colonel Benton was master of ceremonies. To-day they came down to our camp, and the old gentleman seemed highly gratified. He is about 70 years old, rather short, about five feet six inches, well built and inclined to stoutness—not a lean, dried-up Frenchman. Clear eye, firm step, speaks some English, is polite in French style, cordial, kisses the ladies' hands, and regrets that he cannot tarry. Is on his way to see General Jackson, Mr. Clay and Niagara."<sup>1</sup>

A captain was court-martialled and dismissed the service about this time and Hitchcock thus makes record:

"This is the last of a set of men who were all drunkards. We have not now a regular drinker left in the 3rd Infantry and but few who touch liquor at all. Within the last two or three weeks we have had temperance addresses and nearly 400 men have signed the pledge, including several officers."

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand died the next year and was buried by the side of his illustrious chief, whom he served from Austerlitz to St. Helena.



This anxiety for the welfare of his men seems to have been constantly felt. Few commanders were ever so solicitous for the morale of the regiment. During this year a lieutenant requested a pass for a lady to go on the boat when the regiment should move. As the Colonel knew of the lady's reputation the request was refused, and the refusal was accompanied by a most kindly letter of seven pages. The following is an extract:

"I approach this subject with the utmost reluctance, and would infinitely prefer knowing nothing about it. I say this both on account of its nature and on your own account whom I have had so many reasons to admire and to serve whom there is nothing in reason I would not do. Believe me, my young friend, I am too well acquainted with the force of human passion not to make every allowance which the utmost toleration can require consistent with the paramount public duty imposed upon me by my station. Nor do I claim the right to interfere with any officer's private concerns as such, so long as they truly are private: but when they cease to be private and occupy a large share of public report, and assume a form that threatens to affect the welfare of the regiment, I cannot look idly on,

After informing him that it was an affront to the ladies of the garrison that the lady in question was present at the regiment's ball, and if they had known of her presence they would have stayed away, an alternative that ought not to be presented to them, the Colonel added:

"In order to see the enormity of the evil of which I complain it is only necessary to consider what the effect would be if every officer claimed and exercised the right of following your example. What would be the character of a regiment living in such a state? Would not the moral sense of the country cry out against it? Would not Congress abolish a corps known generally to live in such habits? What each one is not at liberty to do no one can do with propriety. It is my duty to attempt to arrest a habit which if generally followed would destroy the regiment. While I give you this warning in private I avail myself of the occasion to say that as an individual you have lost nothing in my estimation. I look upon you as among the most promising officers of the regiment, endowed with superior talents and capabilities. The unfortunate connection you have formed has not as yet seriously impaired these qualifications; but, as one much your senior

in years who has been accustomed all his life to watch closely the influence of habits upon character. I say, in all frankness, that the continuance of the connection and the continuance of an elevated character are incompatible with each other and absolutely impossible. This is a law of life from which there is no appeal, and I implore you to pause before it be too late and break at once a connection which the longer it continues the more difficult it will be to sever. I am not so many years distant from your age as not to be fully aware of all you can possibly urge in defence; and I trust you will not think it worth while to make any answer whatever to this note. I do not write it to invite an argument which your passions or your pride may set up: I write it for a far higher object—first, as a duty to the regiment, second, as a friend of yourself. Do not hastily reject the counsel of one whose experience may be a better guide than your passions and who can have no earthly interest in advising you but for your own good. If you choose to break this connection it shall appear to be your own movement, and, whatever you may think of it now, rely upon it the day will come when you will consider it the deliverance from a bondage more to be dreaded than any other that can afflict humanity—this chiefly because it corrupts the very core of life, ‘hardens all within and petrifies the feeling.’”

The summer and autumn of 1843 passed quietly (“sleepily” says the annalist) at Jefferson Barracks, and in the hundred-page diary between July and January the writer records his reflections on mesmerism and the Absolute, on Proclus, Lucian, Algernon Sidney, Shaftesbury, Sir William Temple, Emerson, Swift, and the Epicurean philosophers. But this book is a biography and not a compendium of philosophy. The diarist sometimes considers the value of his speculations:

“I often have an impulse to write, write, write in my note-book, but I let the new and bright thoughts pass unrecorded. I often have vivid impressions of truth which I think important, but am separated from my book and make no note. The human race will doubtless be greatly the loser!”

He is much interested in new improvements:

“I read a long letter to-day on the subject of a ship-canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, in Central America, the author not seeming to be aware that the thing is now actually in progress under the most promising auspices.”

During the summer of 1843, a conflict occurred at Jefferson



Barracks between an officer and a private soldier of the 3rd Infantry which resulted in a court-martial and magnified the differences between General Scott and Colonel Hitchcock. Lieutenant Don Carlos Buell<sup>1</sup> was arrested and tried for striking a soldier of his company with his sword, and was honorably acquitted on the ground that the blows given were not greater than necessary for self-defence.

When the findings were published, General Scott ordered that the court be revived and required to explain why it had not found Buell guilty. The members of the court sent to Washington a protest (which Colonel Hitchcock wrote) and refused to obey the order and declined either to revise or explain their verdict, on the ground that "the Rules and Articles of War nowhere give authority to any officer to demand from a court-martial reasons for its decisions, much less to dictate what its decisions 'must be' in any case." General Gaines remonstrated against this protest and declared that "the members of the court turn upon the General with as little apparent courtesy as if he were an offender put on his trial before this sensitive tribunal."

General Scott resented the finding and appealed to the President to compel its reversal. The Secretary of War (Porter) ordered a reorganization of the court, and added, "If courts-martial will not do their duty in finding officers guilty when proved to be so, the discipline of the army must be vindicated by the exercise of the summary power with which the President is invested to strike offenders from the list."

Instead of being compliant the court became more defiant. It charged the government with an attempt to intimidate, and refused to reconsider the case, giving the reasons in another document, drawn up by Colonel Hitchcock.

General Scott, who had been alluded to in the letter to the President as "some subordinate authority," was in a fine rage. He began his "remarks on the protest" as follows: "It is generally understood, at Jefferson Barracks, that this protest was drawn up by an officer of the 3rd Infantry (*not* a member of the court) in concert with a certain General, to stimulate disobedience, and in the name of the court to

<sup>1</sup> Made a major-general during the War for the Union.



revenge themselves on the undersigned." He alluded to Colonel Hitchcock only as "the penman," and expressed great indignation at the miscarriage of justice. But the President decreed, "Let all proceedings against Lieut. Buell cease."

The winter of 1843-4 passed at Jefferson Barracks almost as quietly as the summer had done: parades, reviews, dances, eating, sleeping, reading, now and then a court-martial. At the latter, though inferior in rank, Colonel Hitchcock was always called on to write the finding of the court, and to defend it when it was attacked. He visited Fort Jesup, Louisiana, in the spring, whence, having obtained a copy of *Simmons on Practice*, he issued a fearless and almost insubordinate protest of his own and sent it to President Tyler, closing the controversy on the Buell case.

It is dated "Camp Wilkins, near Fort Jesup, La., June 20, 1844," and breathes the same spirit of respectful defiance and arraignment as do all of his remonstrances against the orders of his superiors which he deemed unjust. He says: "I have now to state that the extract [from *Simmons*] furnished by the late Secretary of War, to sustain the opinions he expressed, is garbled and has the effect of a fraud; and if the omission of the material portion of that passage was knowingly and designedly made, I charge that the Secretary of War was guilty of fraud." He then proves it by quotation and adds: "It is very remarkable that a doctrine so precisely stated and illustrated, with the evident purpose of preventing misapprehension, should have escaped the notice of the Major-General commanding the army," Scott, and that he should have endorsed "the erroneous doctrine apparently so fraudulently sustained by his garbled extract." Here was another ample cause of irritation between Scott and the author of these troublesome protests. After furnishing it Colonel Hitchcock went back to Missouri and his regiment.

As usual he spent much of his time in his library, constantly increasing it and moving many books every time he went on any journey.

"My box of books has come—near \$200 worth, including Behman, Cudworth, Napier, Niebuhr's *Rome*, Scaliger, Jeremy Bentham, Strauss, and the *Bhagavat Gita*."

Besides these he perused and pondered on Beaumont and Fletcher, Bacon, Macaulay, Menzel, various discourses on Ontology, and De Witt's *Introduction to the Old Testament*. And he made ample record of his thoughts in his diary.

"Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, April 20, 1844. 11 p.m. Great excitement to-day. As I returned to garrison after retreat, I was met by Captain Larnard and saluted with the news that my regiment is ordered to Fort Jesup, Louisiana. Quite unexpected. Rumors are rife of the annexation of Texas, and this may be a movement towards making a military occupancy of the country beyond the Sabine. I may make the first move into Texas with the colors of the United States, but I am convinced I shall not make the last."

Hasty measures of preparation were taken; books were (largely) stored; property not needed was hurriedly sold; farewell dinners were given and calls of courtesy were made; an impromptu dance was had; some tears were shed by sweethearts and acquaintances and—

"Sunday, 28th Apr. Farewell books—study—etc. Good-bye Plato, and all the rest! We are on board the 1400-ton steamboat *Maria*, and leaving behind us the lowering clouds of yesterday."

On May 3rd the expedition arrived at the mouth of the Red River, and next day was transferred to the steamer *Beeswing* and proceeded up the river "to Nackitosh." Two days later arrived at Grand Cove, a few miles above "Nackitosh," and moved through the woods with teams twenty-five miles southwest to Fort Jesup, within twenty miles of the Texas frontier. General Twiggs and the 2nd Dragoons were already there in camp. Colonel Hitchcock had been stationed there under Gaines, nine years before.

"18th June, 1844. General Taylor arrived yesterday and assumed command of this military department, and immediately requested my aid, and I drew up for him his instructions to the 'confidential' officers sent to President Houston of Texas."

"Camp Wilkins (close by Jesup), July 7. Among the books last received from my bookseller is a translation of Tennemann's *Manual of the History of Philosophy*, 8 volumes, which I have read with great pleasure; also the remainder of my brother Samuel's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics*."



Hitchcock hears that he has been nominated for promotion to be colonel by brevet. Speculates about it. "Am sure that General Scott has not of his own motion done me justice to send up my name. The President must have ordered the brevet." And the same day he goes into an abstruse discussion of the Absolute, of the *Ethica* of the "God-intoxicated" Spinoza, and of the *Parmenides* of Plato. He was also "reading Walter Scott's novels again between evolutions."

"Jesup, 31st Aug. To-day General Taylor will inspect my regiment."

The announcement evidently does not worry the diarist, for he goes on to make voluminous metaphysical entries in the diary on the same day.

He does not take the trouble even to tell us how the regiment acquitted itself.

During September (1844), while living an inactive life at Fort Jesup, Hitchcock read Gabriel Rossetti's works on the esoteric meaning of the Middle Age writers, and got the first glimpse of that new and mystical interpretation of celebrated authors which later so characterized his own writings. He imagines that Cervantes, in creating Don Quixote and ridiculing the extravagant romances of chivalry, may have been outside of the secret sect and so have misunderstood the books which were only ostensibly romances; and he conjectures that Amadis de Gaul and the mythical heroes who succeeded him may merely have been types and symbols of Wisdom and Truth. So he reads and speculates, spending the quiet autumnal weeks mostly with his books.

"Most educated men in this age of the world appear to have no faith at all. The old foundations have been broken up, and, because a moral impression has been created that the faith of the ignorant must not be disturbed, the educated are abandoned to chance—to the guidance of their passions—and the most of these lead miserable lives, doubting and almost hating a faith which they dare not say a word about. They fear to be classed with the bespattered names of Toland, Tindall, and Chubb, yet these men were leaders in a greater reform than that of Luther and Calvin. I note that Locke was born 1632; Tindall, 1657; Collins, 1669; Toland, 1676; Chubb, 1679—all within half a century, and all so-called infidels."



It is needless to say that a man who dwelt with such thought-compelling themes could find little real companionship among the careless officers of a regiment on a wild and bookless frontier. But he had one delightful associate—Major Bliss, afterwards son-in-law of General Taylor and his chief-of-staff. They were much together, and Captain Larnard made up a trio.

“Fort Jesup, 12th October (1844). Day before yesterday General Taylor received an extraordinary letter of instructions from the Adjutant General’s office, marked ‘confidential.’ He has shown it to me. The purport of it is that President Tyler directs General Taylor to hold his command ‘in readiness to move at short notice’ to any point in the United States or in Texas which may be indicated by the United States *chargé d’affaires* residing near the government of Texas. The alleged ground of this order is that Secretary of State Calhoun has received information that ‘the Mexican government or some of its citizens’ are inciting Indians in the southwest to murder and plunder the people of Texas or those of the United States, and that the U. S. are bound by treaty to prevent such outrages. The order, it is true, says that further instructions will be sent from general head-quarters before General T. is to move. But it is evident that President Tyler or his adviser, Mr. Calhoun, is determined to embroil this country before going out of office and perhaps, as Colonel Benton has charge on the floor of the Senate, to prepare the way for a separation of the Union.

“These instructions are infamous. The *chargé* spoken of is the newly appointed Andrew Jackson Donelson, just from under the influence of General Jackson at the Hermitage. When Jackson himself on the very same pretext (the Indians) ordered General Gaines to this frontier, he had the decency to send him a copy of the treaty of 1819, and gave him the discretion to move or not move as might seem necessary. . . . Even General Gaines, when the reckless Jackson was President, was not expected to advance into Texas, and when he did proceed as far as Nacogdoches the only defence ever set up for it was that we might be said to have a claim that the Nueces River was the boundary.”

“15th Oct. Preparations going on for the march. But

I am hutting the regiment for cold weather, notwithstanding, for we may possibly remain here all winter."

The huts were built. The regiment remained with General Taylor's command at Fort Jesup during the winter months, and these were occupied by Hitchcock mostly with his books. Study was the vocation of his life; the practice of the military profession was only an avocation. Yet so conscientious, energetic, and skilful was he in the pursuit of this official pastime, that he commanded the best drilled and best disciplined regiment in the army. While not a martinet in severity he was a strict disciplinarian and always inculcated habits of promptness, punctuality, neatness, and order. In his own quarters he set a constant example of punctilious politeness, of habitual cheerfulness, and of methodical attention to details that must have had an important influence on the whole corps.

His indefatigable research into all parts of the vast realm of knowledge more and more confirmed him in the principles of necessarianism: in the belief that all things occur in accordance with infallible and unchangeable law, and that all action, including human conduct, is the result of causes, sometimes obvious and sometimes recondite, but always quite beyond the reach of the human will.

"As I woke this morning thinking, it occurred to me that a pretty good treatise might be made in the effort to show that all who for a single instant lose sight of the permanent laws of nature and suppose themselves free agents do, in fact, dethrone God and are practical atheists. The notion of freedom is the precise source of all evil and the cause of all the misery and suffering among men. The 'Kingdom of God' would 'come on earth' if men were penetrated with a sense of the law pervading all things by which the individual should be merged in the whole; and in this point of view the writer might consider himself a Christian as have many writers who have opposed the popular faith. . . . So far from supposing the will free, our acting on it by a penalty supposes the contrary; that it is not free, but may be affected or restrained by the application of a suitable cause. . . . Time has only confirmed my early opinions on the side of necessity—taken up chiefly from my own reflections, as far



back as 1817. . . . I find my delight and my support in the doctrine of necessity, which I see underlies all truth whatsoever. Spinoza and Hobbes stand pre-eminent as necessarians among the extraordinary thinkers of the world, and I suppose that in this matter either one of these men saw more clearly than the whole world beside."

"23rd Oct. Every now and then the spirit presses upon me to write out plainly and clearly all I think upon the subject of God and Christ and Nature and Man—not for publication or to affect others, but simply for the discharge of my own mind."

"2nd Nov. Ordered many more books to-day—*Pantheisticon*, Strauss's *Dogmatique*, Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*, and twelve volumes of old plays. . . . True virtue sets a man above the hope of heaven and the fear of hell."

"Jesup, Nov. 28. I rarely note a word of politics, because I am not mixed up in them, exercise no influence upon them, and am but little affected by them. . . . We have certain intelligence that J. K. Polk is elected President over Henry Clay. . . . I look upon this as a step towards the annexation of Texas first, and then, in due time, the separation of the Union."

This will strike the reader as a singular prediction, considering that it was made with great positiveness seventeen years before the outbreak of the Rebellion.

"Jan. 1, 1845. New Year's Day. Still at Camp Wilkins, the name I gave to the camp of the 3rd Regiment of Infantry, adjacent to Fort Jesup. Colonel Twiggs's 2nd Regiment of Dragoons is in the barracks at the so-called *Fort*—there is nothing like a fort here. . . . Some of our officers have been to a horse-race—others have witnessed that barbarous amusement, a gander-pulling. The ladies of camp have received calls. After mess I had a short ride on my bay Jim, and then took up the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, that heathen Spinoza.

"Evening. I came home and amused myself with the flute, playing the opera of *Oberon* and one or two others. Then I took a fancy to count my books and found 761, besides numerous pamphlets, magazines, and tracts, and also not including my music, of which I have over 60 volumes bound and enough music in sheets for 20 volumes more.



"15th Jan. '45. I have been for several days reading the Chevalier Ramsay's *Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion Unfolded*, the writer says 'in a geometrical order.' It is in two quarto volumes. I have been amused to see how everything is converted into an argument for the support of the author's particular theory. I have also read the exceedingly interesting commentary upon the *Golden Verses* of the Pythagoreans by Hierocles—about A.D. 450. The only unpleasant sensation I have in reading it is the regret that I had not access to it twenty or thirty years ago.

"On taking up Helvetius on *Man*, I see it was a posthumous publication. In the same way, Spinoza, Hume, Bolingbroke, and Dr. Hutcheson left their principal theological works to be printed after their death. If it be said that they feared public censure, it may at least be added that they sought no personal gain.

"Mere outward knowledge, such as may be acquired from books and often passes for philosophy, is really extrinsic to the soul, something put on us, as it were, which cannot in the end give the peace that passeth understanding. By theology I do not understand a belief in any set of dogmas, reasonable or unreasonable, of this age or any other, of this country or any other, but I mean an inward experience or perception which books cannot teach but which is as likely to be suggested by Iamblichus or Spinoza as anybody. I think I see it now, as it were, and while the wind rustles the leaves on the trees near my door, I feel a kind of eternity in it and I see how men pass away with both their praise and dispraise neutralizing each other and are lost in the infinite."

"Steamer *De Soto*, March 28. Troubled with severe dyspepsia. Taking an excursion to New Orleans for variety. Aground in Red River. But I have a very remarkable book—*Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. The author labors to prove that all things have been produced by what he calls a Law of Development."

During this excursion Colonel Hitchcock visited his friends in New Orleans and Mobile, in the former city calling on Colonel Many, the Colonel of the 3rd Infantry. He seemed in pretty good health, but had not been in active command of the regiment for many years. On May 13th, in the absence

of General Twiggs, Hitchcock was placed in command of the post at Fort Jesup by General Taylor. The assignment was challenged by a Major of the Dragoons, but it appears to have held good. During May and June, six or eight lines are devoted to the military and social life of the camp, and twenty-five pages to a consideration of Herder and Ritter, of Aristotle, Epicurus, and Zeno, of the inconceivable Absolute and the unknowable *noumenon*. It was in abstruse philosophy and not in practical trivialities that Hitchcock found his satisfaction. But a sharp turn in the current of his life was at hand.

## CHAPTER XXVII

INVASION OF TEXAS. TAYLOR ORDERED TO THE RIO GRANDE.  
THIRD INFANTRY EMBARKS AT NEW ORLEANS. HITCHCOCK  
IN COMMAND AT CORPUS CHRISTI. ON THE NUECES WITH  
ARMY OF OCCUPATION. HIS FORETHOUGHT SOLE SOURCE  
OF SUPPLIES

FOR ten years Texas had been a storm centre. Ever since Santa Anna crossed the Rio Grande and Sam Houston rallied the Texans to establish a new frontier, the whole country had been in a fever of apprehension and solicitude. Presidential messages and partisan speeches elaborated the rights and the wrongs of Texas, the conditions of her independence, and the location of her boundaries. President Polk had been elected and was now ready to take a hand.

“Fort Jesup, La., June 30, 1845. Orders came last evening by express from Washington City directing General Taylor to move without any delay to some point on the coast near the Sabine or elsewhere, and as soon as he shall hear of the acceptance by the Texas convention of the annexation resolutions of our Congress he is immediately to proceed with his whole command to the extreme western border of Texas and take up a position on the banks of or near the Rio Grande, and he is to expel any armed force of Mexicans who may cross that river. Bliss read the orders to me last evening hastily at tattoo. I have scarcely slept a wink, thinking of the needful preparations. I am now noting at reveille by candle-light and waiting the signal for muster. . . . Violence leads to violence, and if this movement of ours does not lead to others and to bloodshed, I am much mistaken.

“Fort Jesup, La., July 3. We are under orders for Texas,



I may say, for the United States Government, or the executive, rather, is evidently determined to send troops into Texas if the least color of a pretext can be found—the only object being to make a practical exhibition of annexation.

“Yesterday we received the order announcing the death of General Jackson—he died (in his bed?!) at the Hermitage the 8th of June. We fired a salute at reveille this morning and are to fire half-hour guns throughout the day,—at sundown a national salute. At 10 A.M. we are to parade and have the order read, after which all work is to be suspended for the day. The flag is to be hung at half mast for a week, and all officers are to wear crape on their left arms and swords for six months.”

“New Orleans, July 16, 1845. The 3rd Infantry under my command left Fort Jesup on Monday, the 7th, at reveille, and marched that day sixteen miles towards Natchitoches. The next day marched to the river and embarked in two steamboats and arrived here without detention on the 10th. Provided with quarters in the Lower Cotton Press at \$100 a day—pretty costly. We called on General Gaines and on Colonel Many, of our regiment, on sick leave from old age and its disabilities. . . . I am also ill.”

“At sea, July 23. We, eight companies of the 3rd Infantry,<sup>1</sup> are on board the steamer *Alabama*, having just passed the Balize settlement of houses on piles at the mouth of the Mississippi. On our way to plant the flag of the U. S. in Texas. General Taylor is on board, in command of the army (to be) of occupation.”

“July 26. Arrived last evening within a few miles of the entrance to Aransas Bay (in southern Texas north of the Nueces River). . . . After breakfast some of us will go ashore in a small boat. General Taylor seems anxious to get the men ashore, on the island. Our lighters are not here. . . .

“6 P.M. High wind and rough sea, but we with great difficulty landed three companies with their mess-chests. I first sent Lieutenant Chandler ashore and he planted a small U. S. flag on a sandhill—the first stars and stripes ever raised in Texas by authority. Although water was difficult to

<sup>1</sup> Two companies were left in New Orleans.

find we sent off three more companies—assisted by a Texas revenue cutter and a small sloop-rigged boat.”

“St. Joseph’s Island [opposite Aransas Bay], July 28. I came from the str. *Alabama* yesterday with the last of the 3rd Infantry, on the lighter steamer, *Undine*, and slept on board. This morning rode around the camp of the regiment, scattered for three miles up and down the length of the island. We have found good water and also had fish and oysters for breakfast. There are two or three families living on shore.”

“Corpus Christi, ‘Texas,’ Aug. 1, 1845. At length I date ‘in Texas,’ beyond the islands. On the morning of the 29th, General Taylor determined to take two companies aboard the lighter *Undine* and attempt to pass down the bay of Aransas into that of Corpus Christi, between the islands and the mainland. The difficulty was that the lighter drew more than 4 feet of water and it was reported that there were but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet on the flats. The General changed his mind two or three times as to the expedience of trying it, but we finally got off before noon, and ran aground about 5 miles down the bay. There we stayed all day and all night; but we at last landed some men and provisions on a raft. Another night passed. It was still found impossible to cross the flats and General Taylor directed the quartermaster to hire all the fishing boats that had gathered around us from curiosity and transfer the men and cargo to them. He was quite beside himself with anxiety, fatigue, and passion. I undertook to tell him that the troops could be very comfortable on St. Joseph’s Island till a high southwest wind should give us high water on the flats; but he would not listen to me and was exceedingly impatient to have the companies off. We finally were got on board of seven small boats and left the steamer about 11 A.M. yesterday and landed here at sun-down.

“All comments agree that our safe arrival is little short of a miracle, and is attributable to the mere accident of the bay being tolerably calm. The people here say that on any ordinary day the wind would have raised such a sea as would have swamped some of the boats, perhaps all. I am now here, however, with two companies of the 3rd Infantry—K and G,—the first troops occupying the soil of Texas. Corpus



Christi is a very small village at the head of the bay. Our arrival is hailed with satisfaction."

Yet the regiment was now clearly in Mexico, according to all the treaties, agreements, and maps which had fixed the frontier. Corpus Christi was a settlement of a few houses on the west bank of the Nueces River, thitherto claimed by Mexico and conceded by Texas to be the boundary. The inhabitants were smugglers and lawless persons to whom war was prosperity and "satisfaction."

"3rd Aug. The regiment is gradually coming up the bay, even the two companies—B and I—left at New Orleans. The 4th Infantry is, I hear, also off Aransas Bay. My diarrhea is aggravating."

"5th Aug. Captain Bainbridge arrived last evening with his company (F) about 10 o'clock and anchored several hundred yards from shore. I sent a small boat to him, but, instead of landing himself, he sent a part of his company with a message that he wished to remain on board till morning (wanted to sleep!). Sent word back to him to unload his boat if possible. He returned messenger to say "As before." I then sent a special message to him which brought ashore his whole company, bag and baggage. The entire landing was effected by 1 in the night, so that the boat could go back after another company. Bainbridge is an honorable and gentlemanly officer, but fond of his comfort and comforts. As we are as yet but a fragment, and but two days' cavalry march from Matamoras where Generals Arista and Ampudia are said to be with a considerable force, it is no time for any one to study his ease overmuch."

"Corpus Christi, Aug. 7. Companies A and C are still behind. . . . I have been ill for the last two days, but am better to-day. My sickness is perhaps partly disgust at the state of things here—the haste and ignorance displayed in this movement. The government has actually no information of the coast, harbors, bars, etc., and as little of the interior."

"Corpus Christi, Aug. 15. Last evening we received news of a declaration of war by Mexico against the United States, and this morning I am preparing to fortify my camp. General Taylor advised that I occupy the hill with a field



work and place the artillery there. I see this will not answer."

"19th Aug. It appears that General Taylor has abandoned his idea of going to San Patricio, leaving his advance stores liable to be cut off, as he would have done. If this is the result of anything I have written I am well satisfied.

"What was announced as a declaration of war turns out to be a circular to the frontier generals calling on them to fill up their armies, and disclosing the intention to send to Congress 'the next day' a war message."

It turned out that the warlike menaces were delayed. The declaration of war was not made at the time expected. The camp at Corpus Christi was entrenched and became permanent in form, all the officers present apparently believing the Nueces to be rightfully the extreme western border of Texas, as was asserted by the Mexican government. Colonel Hitchcock had been placed in command of Corpus Christi and the troops assembling there. Captain Bliss, chief of staff, wrote him from St. Joseph's Island, where General Taylor was encamped: "The Commanding General desires me to say that he places the utmost reliance on your judgment and energy in this crisis. War has been declared by Mexico. The General feels in honor bound to defend the line of the Nueces."

Then the diary records: "Some Mexican traders have come from the Rio Grande, to sell their goods and buy tobacco, etc. They bring their money in silver bars, moulded in sand, each embracing \$50 to \$60, of pure silver. Exchanged by weight. General Taylor has been hoping to open indirectly some communication with General Arista through 'Colonel Kinney,' the proprietor of this ranch.

"The 2nd Regiment Dragoons is due to-morrow to reach San Patricio,<sup>1</sup> all in good health and condition, a month from Fort Jesup, overland."

"C. C., 24th Aug. Yesterday General Taylor set out for San Patricio to meet Colonel Twiggs and his regiment. Colonel Kinney and I rode out a few miles in company with the General and his personal staff, and returned together. Kinney seems to have a government of his own here, and to

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-five miles northward.

be alternately the friend and foe of Mexicans, Texans, Americans, and Indians, sometimes defying them and meeting them with force and sometimes bribing and wheedling them. He lives by smuggling goods across the line.

"11 A.M. One of the most terrific storms I ever knew. Two valuable colored servants struck by lightning. One killed, the other may recover. Many tents blown down. Thunder sounded like incessant cannonade. Most of the ammunition has been protected."

"C. C., 25th Aug. More troops have arrived to-day, and Lieutenant Ringgold has made his appearance at the mouth of the river with despatches from Washington for General Taylor. Camp is wild with speculations. Despatches believed to be important, because it is reported that the quartermaster in New Orleans gave a steamer \$1000 to anticipate her departure by a single day. We shall soon know."

"C. C. 26th Aug. Soon after noting the above Colonel Kinney and myself set out on horseback to meet General Taylor, expecting to ride out five or six miles; but we met him within a few hundred yards of camp. He told us he had been lost by his guide the day before yesterday and was out all night. Going on next day, he met the dragoons about a mile this side of San P., in full march for the 'relief' of this command! The thunder-storm I spoke of was heard by the regiment twenty miles the other side of San P., and, supposing it to be artillery firing, held a hasty council and, under great excitement, agreed to push on with all speed to the relief of this place, believed to be attacked by Mexicans! They got their baggage over the river on a hasty raft and swam their horses.

"I told the General that a special messenger had arrived from Washington. Toward evening Ringgold arrived and brought up his despatches. We are all surprised to learn that the President of the United States has ordered the 2nd and 8th Infantry hither and 4 companies of light artillery, and has informed General Taylor that in case of need he can call out any number of militia he may think proper. Lieutenant Ringgold represents that great excitement prevails in Washington as to our exposed situation here; that, in the absence of Scott, the President and Secretary of War



have ordered on the additional troops. Not the least curious part of the news from the Bay is that General Gaines in New Orleans has taken it upon himself to call two companies of volunteer artillery into service and these are now off shore. It seems that the ridiculousness of the plan to send 800 or 1200 men to make war upon a civilized nation of 8,000,000 inhabitants has occurred to others besides me."

"C. C., 28th Aug. The 2nd Dragoons arrived in camp yesterday. General Taylor, myself, and two or three other officers rode out about a mile and met the advance. After shaking hands with Colonel Twiggs and those with him, I passed along the column and shook hands with the officers and found them pretty well. Colonel Twiggs said he had not been well during the long march—the wonder is that he came. They have lost three by death and nearly fifty by desertion.

"Colonel Kinney's position here is an extraordinary one. While an object of suspicion to both Texans and Mexicans, he seems to be regarded as a man of power by both sides and capable of serving both sides. He seems to have no concealments, but frankly declares that the Texans have no right to go (or claim) to the Rio Grande."

"29th Aug. Received last evening . . . a letter from Captain Casey and a map of Texas from the Quarter-master-General's office, the latter being the one prepared by Lieutenant Emory; but it has *added to it* a distinct boundary mark to the Rio Grande. Our people ought to be damned for their impudent arrogance and domineering presumption! It is enough to make atheists of us all to see such wickedness in the world, whether punished or unpunished."

"C. C., Sept. 2. Papers come to me irregularly drawn and signed, even by the senior officers. What a pretty figure we cut here! We have the 3rd, 4th and 7th regiments of infantry, the 2nd regiment of dragoons, a company of regular artillery, and two companies of volunteer artillery, and, among the senior officers, neither General Taylor nor Colonel Whistler commanding the brigade could form them into line! Even Colonel Twiggs could put the troops into line only 'after a fashion' of his own. As for manœuvring, not one of them can move a step in it. Egotism or no egotism, I am the only



field officer on the ground who could change a single position of the troops according to any but a militia mode.

"Since I am alluding to myself I will note: In New Orleans I procured on my own requisition complete supplies for the Q. M., Commissary and Ordnance departments of my regiment. When we got here my quartermaster and commissary practically served the whole army. Yesterday my qr. mr., Lieutenant Chandler, worn out with fatigue, applied to me and I asked the General to have the brigade qr. mr. attend to the wants of the brigade. This was approved, when, lo and behold! it is discovered that the whole army depends upon me for supplies! No horse can be shod, no bridle rein mended, no tent-pole made or repaired, no rope had, but from me. I have taken occasion to remind Captain Crossman that for carrying this very 'baggage' my regiment has been scolded by the General and that now the whole army is depending on it. He is plainly chagrined, and candidly admits that but for me the army would be destitute. Colonel Twiggs is one of the forethoughtful and provident officers in the army, but he has made a long and exhausting march through the country."

"C. C., 7th Sept. Yesterday I called on Colonel Kinney with General Taylor, and as I left them I met Chepeta, Kinney's spy, just in from the Rio Grande. He has heard that 3000 Mexican troops are approaching Matamoras—will reach there in a week. Now only about 500 men there. Revolt of Mexicans south of river threatened. We are quite in the dark. The General may have information which he keeps to himself, but I know him too well to believe he has any."

"8th Sept. A Mexican has brought in a letter from General Arista, dated 20th Aug. at Meir. So then General Arista has been at Meir and the General of the Am. 'Army of Occupation' has been in profound ignorance of the fact! The letter is addressed to a citizen and refuses to give him a pass to Matamoras: says General A. is there to defend the honor of his country; that, the United States having seized upon a Mexican province, war has become necessary and just. Do not know what force Arista has with him. Captain Hardee and I agree that, if the Mexicans are 'smart' they can give us trouble.

“General Taylor talks, whether sincerely or not, of going to the Rio Grande. This is singular language from one who originally and till very lately denounced annexation as both injudicious in policy and wicked in fact! The ‘claim,’ so-called, of the Texans to the Rio Grande, is without foundation. The argument of Mr Walker<sup>1</sup> passes by the treaty of 1819, by which the United States gave up all west and south of the Sabine, either saying nothing about it or presuming that it was not valid. Yet we took possession of Florida under that treaty. The truth is that the limits of old Louisiana were never settled until by that treaty, so that the treaty of 1819 was really only a treaty of limits or boundary so far as Louisiana was concerned; and to say that the Senate, or treaty-making power, has no authority to determine a question of boundary, is preposterous. Louisiana had no fixed boundary when Louis XV. ceded it to Charles III. of Spain and none when it was ceded back to France (to Napoleon), and continued to have none when it was purchased by the United States from France. The treaty of 1819 fixed the boundary, and since then Texas has been to the United States as much a foreign country as Yucatan, and we have no right whatever to go behind the treaty.

“As for Texas, her original limit was the Nueces and the hills ranging north from its sources, and she has never conquered, possessed, or exercised dominion west of the Nueces, except that a small smuggling company at this place, living here by Mexican sufferance, if not under Mexican protection, has chosen to call itself Texan, and some of the inhabitants have chosen to call themselves Texans.”

“C. C., 13th Sept. Yesterday brought us a disaster. A small old steamer, the *Dayton*, employed for a few days by the government, burst her boiler a few miles from here, near McGroin’s Bluff, and killed seven men and wounded seventeen. Among the killed were Lieutenants Higgins and Berry of the 4th Infantry, and my regiment lost one excellent young man, private Hughes. The *Dayton* had just completed the time for which she was hired when she exploded, with such terrible results.”

<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Walker, Polk’s Secretary of the Treasury, a prominent advocate of the claims of Texas.

“14th Sept. A military funeral took place to-day at the burial-ground which I selected. It is on the brow of the hill northwest of camp, and commands a view of the Nueces and Corpus Christi Bay. It is a beautiful spot. Another body was found afloat and brought in to-day, and two of the injured have died in hospital, making ten deaths from the accident.”



## CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM. CONTROVERSY CONCERNING MILITARY RANK. SCOTT OVERWORKS THE BREVET. HITCHCOCK PENS PROTEST FOR TAYLOR'S ARMY. LEGAL AND HISTORIC ARGUMENT. SCOTT OVERRULED BY PRESIDENT. OLD ORDER RESTORED. TAYLOR CROSSES INTO MEXICO

THE camp of "the Army of Occupation," as it was called, had by this time become a centre of excited interest throughout the country. Enlistments went on in every State of the Union. Troops were hurried down the Gulf of Mexico to "the front." Before the middle of September several more companies of artillery had arrived at Corpus Christi and the 5th and 8th Infantry were on their way and hourly expected. By the first of October there were 3000 or 4000 men in camp, divided into three brigades. Most of the officers were of course as carelessly subservient as the men to the commands of the government, but Hitchcock, while strictly obeying orders and cordially co-operating, as a soldier should, took the liberty, as has been seen, to have an opinion of his own as to the propriety of the advance to Corpus Christi. It was now obvious that a movement further into Mexico would be made, perhaps a sudden movement, and the methodical diarist records how he had sent his valuable portables back to the States and disposed of his property in case of "accident." Among his subordinates at Corpus Christi were several men whose names became famous twenty years later in the War for the Union—Hooker, Heintzelman, Doubleday, Casey, Grant, Mansfield, Meade, Buell, Longstreet, Lee, Hardee, Hill, Johnston, and others. Almost all of the "houses" in Corpus Christi are, he says, "drinking houses put up since our arrival."

"C. C., Sept. 20. General Taylor came into my tent

this morning and again, as frequently of late, he introduced the subject of moving upon the Rio Grande. I discovered this time more clearly than ever that the General is instigated by ambition—or so it appears to me. He seems quite to have lost all respect for Mexican rights and willing to be an instrument of Mr. Polk for pushing our boundary as far west as possible. When I told him that, if he suggested a movement (which he told me he intended), Mr. Polk would seize upon it and throw the responsibility on him, he at once said he would take it, and added that if the President instructed him to use his discretion, he would ask no orders, but would go upon the Rio Grande as soon as he could get transportation. I think the General wants an additional brevet, and would strain a point to get it.”

“3d Oct. It is noteworthy that since the arrival of the 2d Dragoons there have been several disgraceful brawls and quarrels, to say nothing of drunken frolics. The dragoons have made themselves a public scandal. One captain has resigned to avoid trial, and two others have had a dirty brawl. Two others still are on trial for fighting over a low woman.”

“2d Nov. Newspapers all seem to indicate that Mexico will make no movement, and the government is magnanimously bent on taking advantage of it to insist upon ‘our claim’ as far as the Rio Grande. I hold this to be monstrous and abominable. But now, I see, the United States of America, as a people, are undergoing changes in character, and the real status and principles for which our forefathers fought are fast being lost sight of. If I could by any decent means get a living in retirement, I would abandon a government which I think corrupted by both ambition and avarice to the last degree.”

“8th Nov. My books have arrived in good order. . . . About the 5th came news, sent by Commodore Connor at Vera Cruz in a letter to General Taylor, saying that the Mexican government had acceded to the proposition of our government to settle all difficulties by negotiation. . . . Have been quite sick for three or four weeks, but am getting better.”

“17th Nov. I thought a few days ago that I was getting decidedly better, and hoped myself almost well, but last

night a sort of relapse came upon me, and to-day I have been in alarm lest the worst stage should return."

"C. C., Nov. 28. Am quite ill again. Have been sick almost ever since I left Louisiana. Although I have obtained temporary relief two or three times, the trouble (diarrhea) has come back upon me and now prevails with increased virulence. If I value either health or life I may feel it a duty to go away from this climate for a time altogether."

The weather was cold and rainy during these months, and officers and men had much difficulty keeping comfortable. Yet Hitchcock, Bliss, and Larnard read much and commented more—their chief authors being Spinoza, Swendenborg, Schiller, Kant, Toland, Hobbes, Socinus—all earnestly struggling after what they reverently called Truth.

"C. C., Dec. 19. This morning I sent to the President of the U. S. Senate a memorial drawn up by me on solicitation of many officers, on the subject of brevet and staff rank. It sets forth the opinions we officers entertain in opposition to the opinion of General Scott as published to the army in recently printed circular. This circular is an impertinent interposition between General Taylor and the President, and Scott pretends that it was written at the request of the Secretary of War, 'he not having leisure at this time,' etc. General Scott has been in controversy concerning brevet rank ever since the War of 1812, and now that he is Major-General he avails himself of all occasions to give precedence to brevet rank in violation of law and reason. General Taylor, being embarrassed here by Scott's orders, appealed directly to the President, asking for his official decision. But General Scott, with shameless effrontery, answered the question himself, cutting General Taylor off from the President. But now we have sent a letter to the Senate on the subject, which General Scott will wish he had not provoked, and some one hundred and thirty of us have signed it."

On examination of the memorial itself, which was carefully printed, with the names and rank of the signers, it is seen that the signers numbered no less than 158, and were from every rank of the army, from Colonel Twiggs and Colonel Whistler down to the 2d lieutenants. The memorial was dated Dec. 12th, and occupies ten printed octavo pages, and



is followed by General Scott's letter which gave rise to it. As it is now chiefly interesting to army officers, whose conduct has ever since been affected by the ultimate decision, it need not be reprinted here. It was a fearless protest aimed at the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and took high ground, not only of remonstrance but of accusation and warning. It quoted from General Scott's letter the sentence:

"All military rank, derived from law, must be equally valid except so far, only, as it may be restricted by law."

To this it demurred and made answer:

"All military rank is valid so far only as made so by law, and not in so far as it is not restricted by law."

Before entering on the legal and historic argument the memorial boldly set forth:

"We expect to show, with the utmost clearness, that the real ground of what we regard as the erroneous views of Major-General Scott, so far as those views assumed the appearance of argument founded on law, is the assumption of a wrong principle—one of the most erroneous and dangerous that has ever been discussed among men: a principle that has been warred against by the intelligence and liberty of nations since the dawn of modern history; a principle by which King John was brought into conflict with his nobles, who compelled him so far to relinquish it as to sign the great charter regarded as the foundation of English liberty; a principle in the struggle to support which Charles I. was brought to the block; a principle the partial destruction of which deluged France with the blood of her people—the principle of the despot, claiming to rule by divine right, and regarding himself as possessed of all power, except so far as in early ages it was restrained by the blind law of necessity, but which has been in more recent times put under some restraint by laws emanating from the wisdom and love of liberty of the people."

The memorial quotes the Constitution of the United States and appeals to its authority and instances the rules laid down by President J. Q. Adams and President Jackson, the latter by no means punctilious in enforcing law. It further says:

"If the General-in-Chief is thus forward to declare to the army that the regulations of the President, the Constitutional Commander-in-Chief of the army, are *null and void*, he ought not

to be surprised if he should find among his subordinates in the army not a few who might be both able and willing to emulate his example and improve under his instructions, until his own orders and letters may be pronounced *illegal, null, and void.*"

And it ends as follows:

"We emphatically declare that our only object is to present the subject in such form as to awaken attention in the great deliberative and legislative body of the nation who have the power, and, we trust, will see the necessity, of legislating out of existence the causes of the present discontent in the army, which we are assured is on the increase and is rapidly tending to disorganization."

"20th Dec. It seems a little odd that out of this whole army I should be pitched upon by common consent to take the initiative against this letter of General Scott; but I suppose it is because of my having prepared the protest in the Buell case which defeated General Scott more completely than he was ever before defeated in his life."

The jealousies of army life of course continued to annoy, and when, shortly afterwards, Taylor ordered a review, designating Colonel Twiggs to command, Colonel Worth made such a violent protest on account of the precedence implied by his brevet that Taylor dispensed with the review.

The letter, as was anticipated, made a stir in Washington, with the ultimate result that President Polk overruled Scott and re-established the regulations of eight sections, established by President Jackson, Aug. 13, 1829.

"C. C., Dec. 23. The President's message came last night. He reiterates the American claim to the whole Oregon country up to 54° 40', and it looks as if we should have war with Great Britain. As we are in trouble with Mexico, England will be sure to take advantage of it and occupy the disputed territory, the title to which, the President says, is 'indisputable'! We shall probably back down to 49°."

"New Year's Day, 1846. Mild and balmy. The day will go as other days—drinking, horse-racing, gambling, theatrical amusements. A ball is advertised for this evening in Corpus Christi. Colonel Kinney thinks there are 2000 people here besides the army. They are nearly all adventurers, brought here to speculate on events growing out of the presence of troops and the uncertain state of things between



the United States and Mexico. There are no ladies here, and very few women. I take part in no one of the amusements or dissipations of the place, but remain quiet in my tent or walk leisurely through the town to see what is going on. Just finished reading Mrs. Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy*. See no evidence of talent in it."

"Corpus Christi, 8th Jan., 1846. News comes of the passage through the U. S. Senate of the resolutions for the admission of Texas. Also passed the House by a decided majority. In the Senate several States did not vote. It only remains for the people of Texas to elect their officers (already done, I believe) and Texas becomes a State of the North American Union. Meantime we hear that the Mexican General, Paredes, is determined to depose the President, Herrera."

"Jan. 10. I can read Spinoza's *Ethics* when nothing else interests me. I am reading it now and let the news go by unheeded, though reports of war are rife with both England and Mexico. I cannot help thinking that we are likely to be in the wrong in both cases: we certainly are so with regard to Mexico."

January was mostly spent by Colonel Hitchcock in reading and in writing out with his own hand a "small and convenient" copy of Spinoza's *Ethics*—an original translation by his brother, Samuel. It was finished on Feb. 4th "616 pages—no small job for less than twenty days, to one who has never practised chirography at all as an art." About this time he had a correspondence with the poet Longfellow concerning Rossetti's mystics and their esoteric writings.

"Feb. 4. . . . We hear vaguely that General Arista has declared independence and is determined to set up for himself north of Monterey. . . . General Taylor received orders yesterday to move to the Rio Grande, and he has declared his purpose of going to the northeast bank, directly opposite Matamoras. This will make a considerable stir."

"9th Feb. We have to-day a report that Paredes has started 2000 men in this direction and that 4000 more are to follow, swearing death and extermination to us. The departments along the Rio Grande at the same time threaten to set up an independent Mexican government."



"11th Feb. Reports vary by the hour: hostile news from England and from beyond the Rio Grande: the 2000 men coming have run up to 7, 8, 10, and even 15,000—that we shall be invested by 20,000 men and starved out, etc."

"13th Feb. We have now a weekly newspaper at this place. This morning is issued an extra with news direct from Mexico, where Paredes is ordering out an army of sixty to a hundred thousand men for the recovery of Texas, etc."

During this winter Hon. J. A. Black, M. C., from South Carolina, made a report to Congress on the state of the army, in which he took occasion to disparage the service, alluding to the older officers as superannuated and to the younger as "enervated by the ease and luxury of a peace establishment." Colonel Hitchcock resented the report in a letter to Black, dated March 8th, constructed on the lines of a fierce sarcasm, a mode of expression in which he seldom indulged. Irony seemed incongruous with the usual amiable equanimity of his temper.

He thanked the Congressman for his fairness and impartiality, and congratulated him on the comprehensive intelligence and knowledge of the country which the report revealed. The army would rejoice in having such a well-informed man as its champion, especially the members of regiments posted among the Indians or waiting to receive the enemies of the country on the harassed frontier. "It is consoling to know that our services and sacrifices are appreciated." Hitchcock recalled the fact that Black had once been in the army, and added, "The facility with which you have drawn the picture can be explained only by supposing that you referred to your own experience and sat for the picture yourself—if I may be excused for adopting the idea of a noble bard." Several of the regiments had been under canvas or in temporary huts of their own erection for five years, and the "ease and luxury" were illustrated by the fact that

more than half of the whole army has been more than six months encamped at this place, having just passed through one of the most inclement winters ever known in this country, with a very slender supply of fuel and necessarily using the worst of water, sometimes even brackish, from which many have died and all have suffered. . . . This is a feeble testimony of the feeling so

naturally excited by your laudable endeavors to do justice to an *entire class of men*, . . . exposed, as the army is, to defamation from demagogues, often so destitute of honor and honesty themselves as to hate all that is noble and virtuous in others.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

E. A. HITCHCOCK,

*Lt. Col. 3d Infantry.*

The worst of it was that this letter was widely published. To say that Mr. Black was grieved and indignant does not begin to express it. He resolved that he would have the head of this exasperating officer. In his diary of a subsequent year, General Hitchcock records *apropos* of this correspondence:

“I am reminded of what Secretary of War Marcy told me during a visit to Washington some months after my letter was printed. He said that Mr. Black came to him and demanded my immediate dismissal from the army. Mr. Marcy lightly replied that gentlemen in the army must be allowed to have their opinions. Black then, with great violence, denounced the letter as an insult to Congress and repeated his demand for my dismissal. Mr. Marcy said he could not see that Congress had been insulted: that the letter was addressed exclusively to Mr. B., and, in its tenor, was in the highest degree complimentary on the face of it, and he did not see how it could be the subject of a charge of disrespect to Congress. ‘However,’ Mr. Marcy concluded, ‘you can prepare and submit your charges and they will be considered; but, as the court for the trial of Colonel Hitchcock will have to be composed of officers, you may naturally conclude where their sympathies will tend.’

“On reflection, Mr. Black concluded that he could accomplish nothing by charges, and dropped the subject—and returned to obscurity.”

## CHAPTER XXIX

ADVANCE ON MATAMORAS. THE UNITED STATES THE AGGRESSOR.

“MY HEART NOT IN THIS BUSINESS—UNHOLY AND UN-RIGHTEOUS PROCEEDING.” MEXICO MOSTLY UNDEFENDED. PEOPLE AT WAR AMONG THEMSELVES. AMERICAN TROOPS UNDISCIPLINED. HITCHCOCK SEVERELY ILL

**B**EFORE Hitchcock's letter had reached Washington the “Army of Occupation” started for the seat of war,—Matamoras, 150 miles due south. The diarist, being quite ill, had no opportunity to make another entry till he had travelled 140 miles and nearly reached his destination.

“March 25. The army is encamped on the road from Brazos Santiago (‘Point Isabel’) to Matamoras, about midway, or, say, 12 miles from Point Isabel and 15 from Matamoras (and 140 from Corpus Christi). The three brigades are to-day under command of brevet Brigadier-General Worth—General Taylor having yesterday gone down to Point Isabel with Colonel Twiggs and his seven companies of the 2d Dragoons, and a large wagon train, for supplies, ordered there by sea from Corpus Christi. Meantime we wait here with supplies for three or four days brought with us. The army left Corpus Christi in four columns at intervals of one day. The dragoons and Ringgold's artillery set off on the 8th inst.; the 1st brigade (General Worth) and Duncan's artillery on the 9th; the 2d brigade (Colonel McIntosh) on the 10th; the 3d brigade (Colonel Whistler) and Bragg's artillery company on the 11th. My regiment belongs to the 3d brigade. We have been on the road two weeks.

“I was sick and in bed three days before the 3d brigade marched, and was strongly urged by Doctor Kennedy, Captain Larnard, and my adjutant not to attempt to accompany the regiment. Craig and others urged the same thing. But I



knew the importance to myself individually of coming, if possible, and I have come thus far under every disadvantage—riding a number of days in an ox-wagon on a bed laid on boxes of ammunition. The last two or three days I have ridden on my horse, but am exceedingly fatigued and weak to the last degree.

“The army continued to advance, the columns about a day’s march apart, till Colonel Twiggs got within some thirty miles of the Colorado, a small river about 125 miles from Corpus Christi, and some 30 from Matamoras. At that point Lieutenant Hamilton, commanding Twiggs’s advance, was halted by a small Mexican guard (22 men, some say), and told by the commander that if the army advanced further it would be treated as an enemy. Twiggs sent an express back to General Taylor, and kept his horses saddled, I understand, for 36 hours, prepared to meet an attack. Taylor came up and they advanced with the brigade to the Colorado. At the river they were warned that they would be fired on if they attempted to cross. No one knew the strength of the Mexicans. There was parleying. The Mexican scout was on the north side of the river, both banks of which were massed with a thicket of muskeet and chapparal. Taylor told him that we should cross immediately, ‘and,’ he added, ‘if a single man of you shows his face after my men enter the river, I will open an artillery fire on him.’ The man then retired over the river. General Taylor ordered Worth to cross, and Captain C. F. Smith plunged in with the four light companies of the 1st brigade and formed on the south bank. The Mexicans dispersed without firing a shot. They were said to number 300 all told.

“This was on March 20th and 21st. The whole army remained in camp on the 22nd waiting for an ox-train of supplies—necessarily slow. It had a guard of about 60 men. We have altogether about 320 wagons, hauled by mules and oxen. On the 23d we marched some 12 or 14 miles in four columns abreast at deploying intervals, and, as most of the march was through prairie, the army presented a fine appearance. We made a good deal of easting and came in sight of the coast of the Laguna Madre and Padre Island.

“We encamped at night in one of the sweetest spots of

partially timbered country that I ever saw in my life. The wood was principally muskeet, a species of locust and very beautiful, the leaves fresh and green. There was an immense quantity of flowering acacia and the country was literally covered with flowers, while the woods were resonant with the songs of birds. Yesterday we all moved three or four miles and camped to wait the return of General Taylor.

"Since crossing the Colorado we hear a multitude of reports of the most contradictory character. At one moment we hear of a large force crossing the Rio Grande at Matamoras to destroy us; then we hear that the people are in favor of our approach and everything is quiet. We hear that 700 men are on our rear and have been following us for several days. They have not been anxious to overtake us, for we have moved slowly. I have been very much prostrated in strength—never was so weak and now I can scarcely hold my pencil to write legibly.

"As to the right of this movement, I have said from the first that the United States are the aggressors. We have outraged the Mexican government and people by an arrogance and presumption that deserve to be punished. For ten years we have been encroaching on Mexico and insulting her. The Mexicans have in the whole of this time done but two wrong things: one was the destruction of the Constitution of 1824, which would have converted Texas into a mere department of Mexico; this gave Texas the right of revolution, and she established her independence as far west as the Nueces,—no further; the other was the cold-blooded and savage murder of Fannin's men at Goliad—an individual piece of barbarity which has deprived the Mexican army of all respect among civilized people. Beyond these, I know of nothing Mexico has done to deserve censure. Her people I consider a simple, well disposed, pastoral race, no way inclined to savage usages."

This was an auspicious time to make war on Mexico. In the first place, President Polk had purchased the friendship of Great Britain by hauling down our flag in British Columbia where it had floated for fifty years, and surrendering some 400,000 square miles of fertile land which, until we had crossed the Rio Grande, she had never claimed to own.



The angry national cry of "Fifty-four forty or fight" had grown fainter and fainter and finally had ceased altogether, although the Pacific coast up to Alaska was clearly our own; and now without chagrin we saw the British flag go up over the great empire of the north—an empire enough to make eight states as large as England! Half a century later we bribed England again, and another ignoble "understanding" of the same sort existed while the United States seized and subjugated the Philippine archipelago and England destroyed the republics of South Africa.

Now, too, Mexico was mostly undefended. The people were hopelessly and fatally divided and warring among themselves. Several different military men claimed each to be the rightful president of the republic during the advance of the American arms, including Herrera, Salas, Bravo, Paredes, Gomez-Farias, Arista, Bustamente, Comonfort, and Santa Anna. Most of these contestants were at this very moment in the field at the head of their partisans fighting each other when General Taylor arrived in sight of Matamoras.

"26th March. We yesterday broke camp at 3 P.M. and advanced three miles to better water and we are now within ten miles of Matamoras. Last evening General Worth sent me a letter from General Taylor stating that on his way to Point Isabel he was overtaken by the prefect of the department of Tamaulipas, who presented a protest against his advance into the department. The General had just come in sight of Point Isabel and saw that the buildings were afire, burnt by the Mexicans, and he told the prefect that he would give him an answer when he had established himself opposite Matamoras. The prefect left him. This civil functionary travelled in a carriage with attendants in another. Certainly everything looks like opposition just now, and we ought to expect it. Indeed, I have expected it from the first. We have not one particle of right to be here.

"Our force is altogether too small for the accomplishment of its errand. It looks as if the government sent a small force on purpose to bring on a war, so as to have a pretext for taking California and as much of this country as it chooses; for whatever becomes of this army, there is no doubt of a war between the United States and Mexico.



"My heart is not in this business; I am against it from the bottom of my soul as a most unholy and unrighteous proceeding; but, as a military man, I am bound to execute orders.

"P.M. We are waiting the return, hourly expected, of General Taylor from Point Isabel. It is impossible to note the multitude of camp stories in circulation. One represents that Colonel Carabahal told Lieutenant Smith of my regiment (both Masons, 't is said) that General Canales has been following up our rear with several hundred men, ostensibly to annoy us but really to co-operate with us against Paredes's forces: that the moment the army of Paredes shall be defeated by us (an event which he anticipates) 7000 men will rise against the Paredes government and declare the independence of the northern provinces, and that these provinces are willing to concede the Rio Grande as the boundary between them and the United States. Another story is that General Ampudia, with 2500 men, was to arrive at Matamoras to-day, and it is supposed that he will cross the river and be ready to give us battle to-morrow, with such additional force as can be collected in and about Matamoras—in all about 4000 men. Colonel C. told Smith, also, by the way, that General Mehia, commandant of Matamoras, who issued the other day a furious proclamation, was actually in the interest of the contemplated revolt and issued the proclamation to deceive his government. Affairs seem to be very much involved, and we shall have either tolerably smooth sailing or a very boisterous time, for if Canales and Carabahal are playing a deep game against us, we shall have this whole country on us—several thousand men."

"27th March. Morning finds us still in camp, ten miles from Matamoras, and General Taylor not back from Point Isabel. The weather has been stormy, preventing the landing of stores. Meantime the enemy has time to fortify and strengthen himself at Matamoras, or on this bank of the river where General Taylor told the prefect he would give him an answer to his protest. So they know where the General designs going. If he succeeds under all these circumstances, he will be fortunate beyond belief; for we have not more than 2300 men at the outside, and the Mexicans can certainly

bring against us three or four times that number. They cannot be disciplined; but neither are our senior officers acquainted with the common drill of the battalion, much less with the movements of a brigade or an army.

"The colonel of my brigade cannot give the simplest command—that of 'break to the right to march to the left,' for instance—except at the prompting of his adjutant, and it is the same with the commander of the 2d brigade. At the late inspection at Corpus Christi by Colonel Churchill, Inspector-General, both of these commanders confessed that they could not manœuvre their brigades. As a result of this, the 2d was not manœuvered at all, and the 3d was carried through some movements next day, united with the 2d, first under the command of Colonel Garland and then under mine. General Worth of the 1st brigade has some knowledge of the principles of brigade movement, but his brigade is not practised. General Taylor knows nothing of army movements. We ought to be the best instructed troops in the world, but are far from it, except the regiments which as regiments are instructed. I can do anything with the 3d Infantry, for every officer and every man knows his place and his duty.

"12 M. (27th) General Taylor has just returned from Point Isabel and has brought the loaded train with him, but reports sundry accidents. Wind high. *Monmouth* aground. *Neva* burned hole in boiler.

"General Taylor just passed my tent and inquired very kindly after my health. I told him I felt quite well except that I had no strength—could hardly stand. General Worth was with him and remarked that I looked better than when he saw me three days ago. At the hazard of my life I have cut off his chance of taking exception to my staying behind. I have suffered horribly, but I am satisfied.

"P.M. Most of the train has come in, with letters and papers—none for me except *Picayune* containing my letter to Hon. Black, of S. C., ironically complimenting him for an abusive report about the army.

"The talk now is that we are to march early to-morrow morning for the east bank of the Rio Grande del Norte, opposite Matamoras. It will be an important move for good or evil.



“5 P.M. The General [Taylor] has just called to see me. Says we are to set off at half past 6 to-morrow. He spoke of the thick chaparral of two miles or more through which the army must pass by one narrow road which debouches on an open plain two miles this side of Matamoras. If the enemy occupy the plain and plant cannon to command the debouch, we shall have some difficulty. It is a nice point. If we get through and encamp undisturbed for twenty-four hours, I greatly hope we shall not afterwards be disturbed, though there is no telling what individual ambition may lead some Mexican commander to do.

“To-morrow will be an important day. I told the General that, though sick and unable to do camp duty, I shall be at the head of my regiment in case of difficulty, as I intend to be, though scarcely able to sit up.

“28th March, 4½ A.M. As we were to make an early start to-day, I waked betimes and am up and dressed and am waiting breakfast. Captain Morris came to my tent to arrange mode of operating in case of a fight to-day. He said that our brigade commander, Colonel Garland, could not possibly give orders or dispose the brigade for battle. Colonel Garland commands the 4th Infantry, and Captain Morris, while I am sick, commands the 3d, and these, with Bragg's company of artillery, form the 3d brigade. Garland had called on Morris, but Morris told him that, in the event of difficulty, I would take command of the regiment, and they both came to me. Garland wished to determine on certain squares, as if we were sure to be attacked by cavalry. I told him it was impossible to fix upon any plan of that sort; that our movements must depend upon the position and movements of the enemy and on the nature of the ground, though I agreed that we must manœuvre our regiments independently of Colonel Whistler. This day is to be an important one. I am very weak—so weak that I can but just sit up, but in case of trouble I hope to have strength to meet the contingency.

“2½ P.M., and the army is quietly encamped opposite the city of Matamoras. We began our march in four columns at 6¼ A.M., and marched a few miles through an open prairie, when we came to muskeet and chaparral and the columns



fell to rear of each other, dragoons leading, then the 1st, 2d, and 3d brigades—the whole train, some 300 wagons and upward following. This chaparral, with an occasional opening, continued some five or six miles, when we began to observe rude fences and partially cultivated fields with an occasional thatched hut. These fields and huts increased as we approached the Rio Grande, and we finally came in view of the town apparently some few hundred yards from the opposite bank of the river. A few buildings stand out, elevated and with the appearance of decent dwellings. We have the river on one side and an old river bed (lake or lagoon) on the other, so that a strong force occupying the road over which we have come to-day would hold us in a *cul-de-sac*, and our only resource would be a desperate sortie or a sack of the city.

“Sunday, March 29, 1846. Morning finds us uninterrupted in camp opposite Matamoras. Yesterday General Taylor made an effort to communicate with General Mehia, commanding over the river, and ordered General Worth across. When we had got a boat, Worth and all his staff went over. Mehia said he would receive General Taylor, but not his second in command. He would receive a communication, however. General Taylor sent one across and Worth delivered it—an answer to the protest of the prefect whom he saw at Frontone (Point Isabel.) General Worth then returned—the Mexicans swearing vengeance. His staff officers, I understand, represent the military there as exceedingly embittered and intimate a fight as soon as Ampudia comes up.

“12 M. I attempted to write some letters this morning, but was so weak that I had to give it up and lie down. Lieutenant Chandler found a book at a camp some days back—Lovell's *American Reader*—and I have been looking it over, but so weak that I can hardly hold it any length of time. . . .

“Have read more of the *Reader*. It contains prose and poetry, American and English, with translations from Greek and Latin. I find many patriotic speeches about the defence of one's country, the sacred rights of one's own land, etc., and cannot help thinking that they do not apply to us in our attitude of aggression against the Mexicans, but that the

latter have all the motive that Romans or Athenians ever had to defend their country.

"29th March, 10 P.M. An alarm in camp to-night: Reported large body of Mexican cavalry has crossed river above to go down and attack Point Isabel or fall upon us. Said that the batteries in town, looking upon this camp, will open fire on us to-night. Army warned to be ready for night attack and sleep by their arms. General T. was in this afternoon, and does not think enemy will attack Point Isabel or the train, though I suggested that it was likely.

"30th March, A.M., and all is quiet, though we had quite a stirring time last night. It is not really known whether the Mexican cavalry crossed the river. General Taylor thought proper to send three companies of dragoons down to defend Point Isabel. This morning the wagon train was sent to the Point for supplies, and the 7th Infantry has gone with it through the chaparral. A company was also sent up river to the supposed crossing place. . . . No report. It is said that a large body of cavalry reached Matamoras yesterday and 1000 infantry. This probably helped the alarm. If we are not disturbed here it will be very singular indeed.

"10 A.M. Exciting position. Two parties sent up river to hunt the dragoons have not been heard from. Not a syllable from other side of river, but we see them building batteries right opposite us and planting guns to rake our camp. Our engineers are planning some works of defence. . . . Things are in a curious posture. General Worth was assured, day before yesterday, that our consul in Matamoras was at large and attending to his duties, though this is looked upon as an invading army. Is this war or peace?

"I am still extremely weak; so much so that last night I was compelled to tell Captain Morris that, in case of attack, he must command the regiment; for, though in a clear field on horseback I might be able to do something, I could not possibly move about in the uncertainties of a night attack on foot. . . . And to-day I feel no stronger. This is a painful condition for me to be in, but I cannot help it.

"12 M. 30th. As I have begun to note minutely I must go on. Dragoons have returned from reconnaissance of yesterday and report that General Canales came down river



last evening to within five miles of our camp. If there is truth in the statement of Colonel Carabahal both Canales and Mehia are in the plot to revolutionize the northern provinces and throw off the government of Paredes and Mexico itself. . . . We hear that details of 200 men at a time are throwing up the batteries opposite, and that last night's party refused to work unless they were paid. The pay of the Mexican army is behind, and it would not now be provisioned but for the generosity of a rich citizen. It is poorly fed, too. Our mail has not arrived—may have been cut off. . . . General Taylor seems inclined to take Matamoras. Has sent for four 18-pounders. They may reach here in five days.

"1½ P.M. Have just heard report that General Canales is on this side of the river within two or three miles with several hundred men on pretence of 'revolutionizing.' Carabahal told General Worth a few days ago (when in our camp) that they might be compelled to fire upon us to keep up a show of loyalty to their government! General Worth denounced him and told him that if they presumed to fire on us, we would hang them as traitors, and asked him if he supposed we would allow ourselves to be used for their private purposes.

"2 P.M. Colonel Payne rode by my tent a moment since inquiring after my health; says it is now reported that General Ampudia has been in Matamoras two days with his staff, but that his army of 3000 is several days in the rear.

"April 1, A.M. General T. and Captain Bliss (Asst. Adjt.-Gen.) made me a long visit last evening after I had gone to bed—but I took to my bed immediately after tea. General Taylor says he does not believe Ampudia is in Matamoras. He says that Mehia answered his letter about the two captured dragoons—that the first part of the answer was a long international argument against our right to come here; that our coming was an open act of war and could be regarded in no other light, and that General T. had no right to demand the two prisoners, but nevertheless, 'to show the generosity of the Mex'n govt.,' he would send the two dragoons and their horses back.

"Bliss laughed at the strain of the letter, though we all



agreed that General Mehia is right in the character he gives to this movement. General Taylor, however, remarked that he had nothing to do with the international question and had 'only to obey orders.' . . . It is against the practice of our government to form foreign 'entangling alliances.' Later.—The two dragoons were released and have arrived in camp.

"2d Apr., A.M. The President of the United States has decided the brevet question on the basis of General Jackson's decision of 1829, and in accordance with our numerous signed memorial. The order was brought me and I read it aloud to all the officers, who, knowing that I wrote it, gathered rapidly around to rejoice and congratulate me. It is a signal triumph of justice: we of the line have gained our point completely.

"General Arista is reported on his way to Matamoras in the character of Pacificator. It is also reported that the Mexicans are throwing up additional ramparts to defend the town or to rake our camp. This morning General Taylor has begun throwing up what is described as a front of a fortification—two bastions and a curtain towards the town. There is a general impression that our camp is very much exposed, and all remark upon the perfect *sang froid* with which General T. sat down and continued here under the guns of Matamoras.

"5 P.M. Great activity over in town to-day. Bells ringing, bands playing, citizens hurrying hither and thither. Some think it is a Catholic gala day: some that more troops have arrived. . . . It is reported that brevet Brigadier-General Worth is so incensed at the order on brevet rank, that he has sent in his resignation and asked permission to leave the army. No one believes that he expects it to be accepted."

"4th Apr. To note the multitude of camp rumors is getting to be fatiguing. It is now alleged that the Mexicans are to cross the river in force both above and below and quite surround and destroy us. And other stories are rife.

"2 P.M. I am still very weak. My bones ache as if I had overfatigued myself. Doctor Jarvis says it is the usual effect of fever in this climate. I told him I had had no fever. He then said it was probably debility, which is quite probable, as I have been sick for months.

"5 P.M. A gun—another—two or three others—more and more—scattering. I on my bed. Could see the light infantry firing. Rose and looked out. Colonel Whistler rode up and said a deserter had been shot and killed while trying to swim the river.

"5th Apr. Another deserter shot while swimming the river to-day. This is an unpleasant state of things. What glorious news it would be to hear that Mr. Slidell had been received in Mexico and was arranging a treaty of peace! I would be off instant, as my health requires. It is a severe mortification, even a humiliation, not to be able to be at the head of my regiment. The train has come in safely from Frontone, four 18-pounders leading the way.

"10 P.M. A spy just back from Matamoras reports 3500 men now there, but miserably poor soldiers except the cavalry. He brags and says the 8th Infantry alone could take the town. He says that they have twenty or thirty pieces of ordnance, but old, and on old patched-up carriages. The heaviest is a 9-pounder. General Ampudia is expected to-morrow with 3000 men. He says that four out of our six deserters the other night were drowned. The people of the town are greatly incensed against us for coming here."

"7th Apr. General Taylor made me a long visit this A.M. He told me General Worth is to leave here to-morrow. He added that, on tendering his resignation, General Worth had asked a leave of absence as soon as his services 'could be *dispensed with*,' but he determined to relieve Worth at once. So Worth leaves us while the very atmosphere is animated with rumors of attacks upon us, and he had just obtained from a spy of his own the most distinct threats from the other side of the river. I cannot help asking myself what would have been thought of the patriotism of a revolutionary officer who had abandoned his post in the presence of the enemy on an alleged grievance which, in the opinion of almost everybody, is without any proper or defensible foundation..

"8th Apr. Return of weakness to-day. Dr. Jarvis is attending me. 12 M. Called on General Taylor this morning and he expressed very clearly his opinion that I ought to go to the North for my health. He has intimated this once or twice before, and all my friends have urged the same



thing. I have concluded to ask the official opinion of Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Jarvis, and have written a note accordingly and have talked with Dr. Kennedy about it. He told me that he long since was of opinion that I ought to leave Corpus Christi, and reminded me that he had often spoken to me about it, but that I would not listen to it. Captain Larnard told me long since to go, and renewed the advice this morning when I shew him my note to Kennedy. Captain Barbour was equally strenuous yesterday in favor of my going; almost everybody who has seen me of late has given the same opinion and many have expressed astonishment at my reluctance to leaving the army. But I do not wish to be misconstrued.

"10th Apr., 3 P.M. Have sent in my application for a two months' leave of absence on recommendation of both Drs. Jarvis and Kennedy. Colonel Twiggs called this morning and expressed his surprise that I had not gone long ago, and particularly that I allowed myself to be 'dragged along through the country' as I did—alluding to my leaving Corpus Christi with the army when sick and travelling a number of days in an ox-wagon. I go out with Colonel March, of St. Louis.

"4 P.M. The General has given the order for my leave of absence for sixty days.

"Frontone (Point Isabel), April 12, A.M. I left General Taylor's camp at 10 A.M. yesterday and arrived here at 5 or 6 P.M. Rode on horseback nine or ten miles, and then on a bed spread on the baggage wagon. Colonel Twiggs gave me an escort of his own accord, of ten dragoons. Was very much fatigued in the evening. All the officers here most friendly.

"13th Apr. Last night at 10 or 11 o'clock a dragoon express came from General Taylor bringing news that Ampudia had arrived at Matamoras with 2000 additional soldiers picked up on the march, and has notified General Taylor that if he does not start to retire beyond the Nueces in 24 hours, the failure to do so will be considered a declaration of war. General T. answered that he had taken his position by order of the U. S. Government, not to make war upon Mexico or to injure its people—that he should maintain it and if fired on should return the fire. Ampudia withdrew his 24-hour threat and sent T.'s answer to Mexico."



## CHAPTER XXX

ORDERED NORTH FOR TREATMENT. SURGICAL OPERATIONS IN ST. LOUIS. LOSES PARTICIPATION IN TAYLOR'S GREAT BATTLES. RETURNS SOUTH WITH COOL WEATHER

A HEAVY "norther" raged for some days and the vessels off the mouth of the Rio Grande found it impossible to put to sea. During this time Colonel Hitchcock was very uncomfortable, unable to get warm quarters afloat or ashore. He first tried the steamer *Cincinnati*; she did not leave. He transferred to the schooner *William Bryant*, and afterwards to the steamer *Harney*, but shortly after he got upon this steamer she was run into and smashed up by the steamer *Monmouth* and rendered "unseaworthy." He declared that he would experiment no more, however, and told the captain he would go with him to "the States" if he could patch up the craft so as to keep the water out. An attempt was made; she started again, and soon Brazos Island was out of sight and she was headed for New Orleans. Then came a renewal of the dreaded "norther," and the frail craft came near foundering in the Gulf. "The night was a terrific one. There was much fright among the women. Many were greatly excited and gave up all for lost." Two officers who were aboard acted in such a way as to increase the panic. "As for myself," writes the diarist next day, "I lay in my berth with perfect quietness, knowing that nothing that I could do or say could change our prospects in the least degree, and there, in my berth, through the whole night, knowing that the craft had been pronounced unseaworthy, I was thinking of death as a probability near at hand, asking myself from time to time how I should meet it; but I could come to no other conclusion than that I would rather avoid it."

"Monday, April 20, 6 A.M. Made the Southwest Pass light this morning.

"New Orleans, 21st Apr. Reached the St. Charles Hotel at about half past 11 last night and was instantly surrounded by a dozen editors and reporters, eager for news. Have been giving them news ever since.

"April 22. Have ordered sixteen boxes of books to St. Louis ahead of me. Have received from the translator a manuscript copy of Spinoza's *Tractatus*.

"29th Apr. Old steamer *Louisiana*, above Natchez. Left New Orleans the 26th. Am reading Humboldt's *Cosmos*. It is very fascinating and full of promise. Physically, I have alarming symptoms of a fistula. I fancy myself going to a Philadelphia surgeon on a horrible mission. Well, I had as soon die there as anywhere. About November last Dr. Kennedy and others urged me strongly to leave Corpus Christi and go north, but in the unsettled state of affairs with Mexico I was unwilling to leave the regiment that was under my command. But I became useless to the regiment and the army.

"St. Louis, Mo., May 5. Arrived yesterday morning. Warmly welcomed by friends. Gave Dr. Beaumont a detailed account of my twelve or more months of out-of-healthness.

"11th May. There has been at last an actual conflict on the Rio Grande. Captain Thornton and Lieutenant Kane were sent out with fifty or sixty men. Both these officers were killed and the residue taken prisoners. Colonel Cross was also waylaid and murdered not far from our camp.

"St. Louis, 20th May. Have just received the message of President Polk based on the capture of Thornton's party. It occupies two columns in a good-sized newspaper. The President gives a history ('his-story') of our intercourse with Mexico for the last twenty years, in which he would make it appear that we have been the most injured, patient, and forbearing people in the world! Now that war exists, we must prosecute it with vigor, etc., etc. The President says, in effect, that, anticipating the acts of war that have now taken place, he some months since authorized General Taylor to call into his service volunteers, etc. *Why* did he anticipate such conduct? Ans.: Because he himself had

provoked it by the most outrageous insults to Mexico—and not only insults but aggression. He ordered our troops a hundred and fifty miles beyond the proper boundary of Texas into Mexican territory, and because the Mexicans presumed to send troops east of the Rio Grande, upon their own rightful soil, he says they are upon ‘our territory.’ We ought to be scourged for this!

“Sunday, May 24. General Taylor has had two fights<sup>1</sup> between Matamoras and Point Isabel, in which he lost some very valuable men, but successfully cleared the region of Mexicans, capturing their cannon, killing many, and taking many prisoners, among them General Vega. Our Major Ringgold died of his wounds. It is said that Major Brown has also died of wounds received in defending our post opposite Matamoras.<sup>2</sup>

“I am necessarily losing, from a military point of view, all the honors of the field. I was hoping that no collision would take place. . . . My absence from my regiment at such a time as this is a species of death; yet the doctor says I must not think of going south in the hot weather, as he has another surgical operation to perform. If I go back before my constitution is renovated, the disease will return in an aggravated form, so that I shall be of no service, and shall only destroy myself.

“St. Louis, June 5th. The newspapers announce the entrance of General Taylor into Matamoras and the complete dispersion of the Mexican army from that point. . . . I wish I could describe the lovely quiet rustic scenery I have viewed to-day. What a beautiful world for man to disturb by unjust wars and commotions!

“June 12. Colonel Kearney, 1st Dragoons, now preparing an expedition against Santa Fé, has written and offered me the appointment of inspector-general of his army. I have thanked him but told him I am not in health and had applied for other service in anticipation of returning health.

“July 7. I am leaving to-day for Buffalo *via* Chicago. . . . July 10. Left Chicago at 8 A.M., having come there

<sup>1</sup> The battle-field has since been known as Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

<sup>2</sup> Fort Brown, the site of the present town of Brownsville.



in a stage from Peru, 90 or 100 miles in 22 hours, riding all night. There are no established farms with orchards, etc. The canal from Chicago to Peru is in progress and is expected to be finished in a year. Chicago contains, they say, 15,000 inhabitants, and is growing. We are on a steamer on Lake Michigan.

“Niagara Falls, July 16. . . . No description to be attempted by me.”

During the summer Colonel Hitchcock obtained a prolongation of his leave and travelled through Eastern communities where he formerly lived or sojourned. He visited New England; he went to church (Unitarian) and speculated on the Whence, Why, and Whither at Boston. He spent a few days in Washington; was in the hands of a surgical specialist at Philadelphia; read Strauss's *Vie de Jesus*, Swedenborg's *Principia*, the *Biography of Benvenuto Cellini*, Chubb's *Vicarious Suffering*, and always Goethe and Spinoza. He bought books and more books; he studied the catalogues of rare old tomes for sale in London and sent for many; he wrote in his diary, “If even the Doomsday Book recorded miracles, it might reasonably be rejected”; and in all his readings he sought for the origin of phenomena and the elucidation of the unknown.

“I have just been thinking of my departure from Boston—winter of 1823-4—and how the mode of travelling has changed since the introduction of railroads. Then it was usual for the stage-driver to go around the city at 3 o'clock in the morning and wake up passengers, directed to their residences by the register at the stage-office where each passenger engaged his seat and paid his fare the day before. At 3 the passenger was aroused, got up, and dressed and waited for the stage at 4. Frequently nine passengers would ride three or four hours in perfect silence in the dark before the coming dawn would allow a vision of each others' faces. Then came the scrutinizing glance—an anxious moment, for they were perhaps to ride together all day.

“17th Sept. Steaming down the Ohio. I am familiar with the route and can read. Have got hold of *Tertullian*. Have bought the first ten volumes of Swendeborg's *Heavenly Arcanum*. Have now the most of his works.”

"28th Sept. We reach the Mississippi after eleven days on the Ohio!

"St. Louis, 6th Oct. Went to Jefferson Barracks on the 3d; came home in the rain and had a violent attack. Dr. Beaumont attended me. To-day I am better, but the Doctor says I ought not to think of going South at this season of the year in this state. I am losing everything valuable in my profession, but cannot help it."

"13th Oct. Still here at St. Louis, but hope soon to be off to the Southern army.

The 15th of October was a day of mingled emotions for Colonel Hitchcock, sadness predominating. He received the news of the capture of Monterey by General Taylor, but it was clouded by the death of many of the officers of his own 3d Infantry. Major Barbour, Captain Field, Lieutenant Hazlitt, Captain Morris, the commander of the regiment, and, most trying of all, Lieutenant Douglas Irwin, its adjutant, and the husband of the daughter of Dr. Beaumont, under whose roof Colonel Hitchcock was a guest. His was the melancholy duty to break the news to the family.

"2d Nov. Have just read Lewes's *History of Philosophy* (4 volumes), in which he introduces Kant's positive philosophy. He says there can be no such thing as a science of ontology—a knowledge of the absolute.

"3d Nov. About the 13th ult. I applied officially to the Adjutant-General at Washington to have all the recruits for the 3d Infantry sent here and placed under my orders, so that I might give them as much preparatory instruction as possible and hasten them on to General Taylor. My request is refused. This is an outrage on me. I shall inquire into it. . . . I am now to make my preparations for going back to the army, and, as I shall leave this note-book behind me and may never see it again, I feel as if I ought to record my last wishes—or will and testament, as they say. A short horse is soon curried."

Colonel Hitchcock occupies several of the immediately succeeding pages of his diary with an expression of his wishes as to the disposition of his property, especially his books and papers, "in case of accident." He disparages the importance



of his own manuscripts and says that he made his diary for his own use and convenience.

“10th Nov. I am very much disgusted with this war in all of its features. I am in the position of the preacher who read Strauss’s criticism of the *Gospel History of Christ*. Shall he preach his new convictions? Shall he preach what his audience believe? Shall he temporize? Shall he resign? Here the preacher has an advantage over the soldier, for, while the latter may be ordered into an unjust and unnecessary war, he cannot at that time abandon his profession—at all events, not without making himself a martyr. In the present case, I not only think this Mexican war unnecessary and unjust as regards Mexico, but I also think it not only hostile to the principles of our own government—a government of the people, securing to them liberty—but I think it a step and a great step towards a dissolution of our Union. And I doubt not that a dissolution of the Union will bring on wars between the separated parts.

“Tuesday night, 12 P.M., the 17th Nov., 1846. Probably the last night I shall pass at Dr. Beaumont’s house, for I have taken passage on the *Algoma* for New Orleans and the army in Mexico, and am to start to-morrow morning. If I were to thank God for anything, it would be for the friendship of this family, and for its unlimited kindness and confidence—not for a brief period but for many years—and for the feeling that I have endeavored to deserve it.

“New Orleans, Dec. 15, 1846. High time to use my notebook. Left St. Louis on 21st, and got here the 31st. With other officers have since waited for a steamer to take us to the Brazos at St. Iago in western Texas. Report is fully confirmed that General Scott will take the conduct of the war, and it is considered settled that the castle of San Juan at Vera Cruz is to be assailed. My regiment is with Taylor at Monterey.

“My feeling towards the war is no better than at first. I still feel that it was unnecessarily brought on by President Polk, and, notwithstanding his disclaimers, I believe he expressly aimed to get possession of California and New Mexico, which I see, by his message received here to-day, he considers accomplished. Now, however, as the war is



going on, it must, as almost everybody supposes, be carried on by us aggressively, and in this I must be an instrument. I certainly do not feel properly for such a duty, particularly as I see that my health is almost sure to fail me—not only from the nature of the disease with which I left the country in April last, but because I know the remains of that disease are still with me. I feel very much like making a sacrifice of myself and drawing the curtain between me and this life. I am convinced that no contingency connected with this war can affect that in me which, by its nature, is immortal, and the end must be the same be my passage to it what it may. As a matter of taste and choice, I should prefer a more quiet career, and one in which I could pursue my favorite studies, of philosophy. But this is not to be.”

## CHAPTER XXXI

FIRST SHIP TO THE RIO GRANDE. "SOMETHING LIKE A MIRACLE HAS HAPPENED." RECONCILIATION WITH SCOTT, WHO SURPRISES HIM WITH INVITATION TO JOIN HIS STAFF. ACCEPTS APPOINTMENT AS INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ADVANCING ARMY. OLD QUARRELS FORGOTTEN. ALL SORTS OF WAR RUMORS AFLOAT. ANCHOR OFF VERA CRUZ

**I**N such a state of health and with such meditations Colonel Hitchcock resolved to rejoin his regiment at once and to lead it as effectively as his impaired strength would permit. With this determination he took the first ship to Brazos Island. A week later General Winfield Scott made his appearance at New Orleans and also proceeded immediately to Brazos, with many misgivings.

General Scott says, in that remarkably candid book his *Autobiography*, that, before he embarked at New Orleans for Mexico, he was informed that the President intended to make Senator Thomas H. Benton a lieutenant-general and set him over his (Scott's) head; and, adding that this report was soon confirmed, and that "in the President I had an enemy more to be dreaded than Santa Anna and all his hosts," he thus sums up: "Mr. Polk's mode of viewing the case seems to have been this: 'Scott is a Whig; therefore the Democracy is not bound to observe good faith with him. Scott is a Whig; therefore his successes may be turned to the prejudice of the Democratic party. We must profit by his military experience, and, if successful, by the force of patronage and other helps, contrive to crown Benton with the victory and thus triumph both in the field and at the polls.' This bungling treachery was planned during the precise period of my very friendly interview with Mr. Polk!

. . . The vile intrigue disgusted Congress and was defeated."

"Brazos Island, Dec. 25, and this is Christmas."

During the next three days after making this note, Colonel Hitchcock tarried at the Brazos, getting his horses and baggage ashore, discussing the most practicable route to his regiment, lamenting his separation from it at this critical period, and discussing with other anxious officers reports that had come across country that Santa Anna was advancing on Saltillo with 23,000 men, that General Taylor's communications were completely cut off and General Worth surrounded. Everybody seemed to be in motion at the front. There was scarcely any defence for Americans along the river, and the country below Matamoras was overrun by Mexicans and unsafe for any small parties. Matamoras was held by one regiment of Ohio volunteers, and the great depot of stores at the Brazos was defended by only one company, without a piece of artillery. The road to Monterey was beset by Santa Anna's men, and no small party could get through.

"Dec. 28, A.M. Was much affected by weakness and debility yesterday afternoon. Now much depressed. Am in a painful position, separated from my regiment at such a time, and not only unable to join it, as I suppose the enemy occupy the communications, but, if the road was open, I do not feel that I have the strength to execute the journey of 300 miles by land from Matamoras.

"5 P.M. Well! Something like a miracle has happened between General Scott and myself. This morning I was talking with the General's aid, Lieutenant Scott, when the General came up and, being joined by his aid, they mounted horses and rode away. I remained at the Q.M.'s office talking till presently the General returned. Immediately after they dismounted, Lieutenant Scott came and, saying that he desired to speak with me, we stepped aside and he said:

" 'The General will be pleased to see you.' "

" 'What?' said I.

" 'The General will be glad to see you,' he repeated; 'he desired me to say so.' "

" 'Indeed,' said I, 'you surprise me very much. Is is so?' "

"The aid reiterated the message, adding that the General



had seen a letter of mine to somebody, 'perhaps the Secretary of War, and was satisfied with my course of conduct.' I tried hard to recall any letter of mine touching the General, but could not.

"The aid could not help me, but said at all events he could assure me that the General would like to see me, and had said that he appreciated my qualities (which is rather equivocal, as qualities may be either good or bad). It was not for me to hesitate, particularly as I wished to fall in with the General's escort, to leave here to-morrow. Accordingly I intimated my readiness to call on the General at once and did so.

"The General arose and offered me his hand, asked me to be seated, and then made me a very complimentary speech, saying that, without intending to flatter me, he knew of no officer of my rank who was more needed or could do more good with the army than myself. He had before spoken of my bad health on leaving the army and expressed himself as happy to see me looking so well, etc., etc. I am not well at all to-day: the old trouble is upon me, but it may be temporary. If it continues I cannot and will not undertake a land journey.

"The General asked me if I was ready to move forward.

" 'Perfectly,' said I.

" 'Got a horse?'

" 'Two, General.'

" 'Glad! Glad! You will join me to-morrow?'

" 'With great pleasure.'

" 'Clever! Very clever! Right! Right! We start early.

" 'I will be ready, General.'

"So, then, here is a shake of the hand where I least expected it. Colonel Bell, when Secretary of War, once brought us together at General Macomb's dinner-table and we were civil to each other for weeks. But Bell went out and Spencer came in, and the General found a place for a flare-up and did flare up in the highest sort of style. No matter; it is proper now for me to allow him to take his own course."

That Colonel Hitchcock should express great surprise at being thus greeted civilly and treated more than civilly by

General Scott was to be expected. They had fallen out years before. Scott had good reason to believe that Hitchcock was cognizant of some of his personal matters which should have been kept entirely private. Scott had therefore prevented his appointment as Inspector-General in Washington, and had tried to drive him from the city. Hitchcock had defeated Scott in the matter of the Buell court-martial. They had a misunderstanding over the Florida campaign. On being called to an important staff position by General Taylor, Hitchcock had been selected by nearly all of the officers of the "Army of Occupation" to write their protest against Scott's order concerning brevets,—a protest which caused that order to be rescinded by the President. Every time they had met or communicated with each other, or spoken of each other, the gap that separated them had seemed to widen. And now the General had met him with a cordial "shake of the hand" and "complimentary speech." It was a gracious attitude equally creditable to both.

"Steamer *Big Hatchet*, Matamoras, Dec. 30. Crossed over from Brazos Island yesterday on horseback in General Scott's company (8 miles) to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Took a steamer then towards night and arrived here this morning (80 miles). Saw Colonel Clarke, the Military Governor of Matamoras, and heard General Scott question him about current rumors. The very atmosphere is filled with them, but no single fact seems well authenticated. The most moderate listeners seem to think that important events are being enacted at or near Monterey. The want of exact information is the darkest feature of the business. Taylor's communications may be cut. No one knows where my regiment is or can indicate a way in which I can reach it, for everybody sees that my health is not equal to a long and exposed journey on horseback. General Scott has treated me as an invalid and advised as to my regimen with a view to my recovery.

"Jan. 1, 1847, finds me on board steamer *Corvette* ascending the Rio Grande above Matamoras, General Scott and staff being on board. We left yesterday morning. By one of the boats coming down from Comargo yesterday (300 miles above Matamoras) General Scott had a letter from General Worth,



dated Dec. 21. The troops south of Saltillo are believed to be General Santa Anna's army.

"General Scott has been particularly civil to me and has explained at some length the orders which brought him here and the ulterior objects of his movement, which I do not feel at liberty to note here lest I might lose my book. He has talked quite familiarly of his interviews with President Polk—what Mr. P. said, what he said, etc.

"4th Jan., 1847. Descending the Rio G. on the *Corvette*, General Scott on board. We were at Comargo the principal part of yesterday. It is one of the most miserable places I ever saw, dirty and dilapidated and but little better than a Seminole village. General S. wrote and sent off despatches for General Butler at Monterey and for General Taylor, who is on the march to Victoria, two hundred miles further south. General Scott shew me both despatches. He directs General Butler to abandon Saltillo and, occupying Monterey only for defence, to place certain disposable troops under command of General Worth with orders to proceed to Brazos. The disposable troops under General Taylor are ordered to Tampico, also on the coast. General Scott, in his communications marked 'private and confidential,' points to operations of his own in contemplation south of Tampico. He says, at the close of his letter to General Taylor, that Providence may defeat him, but he thinks the Mexican can not.

"The people along the banks of the Rio Grande live very much as Indians in mud huts and look not unlike them in complexion, hair, and eyes. They bring wood for our steamboat, the captain giving orders at \$2.50 a cord.

"Mouth of Rio Grande, 9th Jan. Arrived here yesterday morning. Detained by a norther. General Scott and staff still on board the *Corvette*, but will go to the Brazos this A.M.

"13th Jan. On the 9th, when General Scott went to the Brazos, I rode by his side four miles, and he talked a long time to me, his aid and son-in-law, Lieut. H. L. Scott, being in hearing. He began by saying that he had not yet had a special conversation with me as he had intended, and then went on intimating that he might need to call on me to act as his Inspector-General. He added that it was infinitely important that I should command a full battalion. . . . I would



much rather be studying Swedenborg than be an instrument in carrying on this abominable war against Mexico. . . . My illness has returned upon me.

"18th Jan. I rode over to Brazos yesterday and dined with General Scott, finding him very gracious. It was 'my dear Colonel' as I took leave to return to the mouth of the river. He expects me to remain here for the present.

"23d Jan. The *Corvette* has arrived down, with General Worth and the 4th Infantry—heroes of Monterey, captured Sept. 26. Talked with Larnard till midnight. I suggested Palo Alto Landing for the camp, and it was there established. General Worth invited me to make his camp my stopping-place. I thanked him, but am making my quarters in an old hulk on the river."

This very week Colonel Hitchcock was ordered on court-martial, and here was fated again to come face to face with General Scott, insisting with success that the judge-advocate should "require" the commanding general to produce before the court a document which he had declined to furnish. General Scott must by this time have been convinced that this man would make a fearless staff officer!

"28th Jan. Philosophy seems to be forgotten, yet it is not out of mind. I think of more than I note, but I chiefly *feel* how perfectly in contrast with my position are my wishes. I despise, *abhor*, the authors of this war<sup>1</sup> and yet am compelled to be employed in it. There is no sign of peace, and everything indicates an attack on Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa. The newspapers just received contain numerous accounts of preparations, ordnance, boats, etc. While I feel this contrast, I have, at the same time, some of the clearest views of Spinoza's doctrine I ever had."

<sup>1</sup> Gen. U. S. Grant, who was also present throughout this war, recorded his opinion of it many years later in his *Memoirs*, thus:

"For myself I was bitterly opposed to the policy toward Mexico, and to this day regard the war which resulted as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory. . . . The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions."

"1st Feb. The court-martial of Colonel Harney ended to-day. As usual I wrote the opinion of the court, that Harney be reprimanded in general orders for disobedience amounting to insubordination.

"5th Feb. Was told to-day at Brazos by General Scott to consider myself his Inspector-General. Order to be issued and printed in Tampico. The General told me to do whatever I thought proper as Inspector-General and use his name as authority."

General Scott was evidently no narrow-minded man. He showed himself capable of modifying his conclusions and of overcoming his resentments. Moreover, he was in a peculiar if not an embarrassing position. He had at first, with an amount of heat quite unnecessary if not unbecoming, declined the command of the army in Mexico, and afterwards had sought and obtained it by virtually retracting what he had said. He knew that the most skilful engineers in the country were the graduates of the Military Academy at West Point, and that neither he nor one of the generals on whom he must depend had ever had the advantage of a training at that institution: neither Taylor, Worth, Twiggs, Pillow, Wool, Butler, Quitman, Cadwalader, P. F. Smith, Cushing, Patterson, Shields, or Pierce. He must get some West Point men. Here was one celebrated for being a strict disciplinarian and clear-headed master of evolutions—one saturated with booklore to whom an illy-schooled commander-in-chief might at any moment turn for information, as to an encyclopædia. For years he had been Commandant of Cadets at West Point and Instructor in Tactics. He was exemplary, extremely methodical, and even punctilious—well adapted to the difficult service of co-ordinating the brigades of a command and keeping a military household in order. He was highly educated and wrote with such force, facility, and elegance that he had come to be called "The Pen of the Army." Should General Scott sink his personal pride in this matter as he had in the other, and put this accomplished soldier and scholar at the head of his staff, where he could at any moment have the use of his sword and pen? He would and he did.

"17th Feb. Steamship *Massachusetts* half way from Brazos to Tampico. General Scott and staff and four companies



of artillery and many officers on board. We set sail from Brazos on the 15th.

"Tampico, Mexico, 20th Feb. Landed yesterday. Town of 7000 some five or six miles up the river. Low flat-roofed houses. Sail hence to Lobos Island,<sup>1</sup> 130 miles north of Vera Cruz.

"March 2, 1847. Left anchorage at Lobos at noon.

"March 4. On board *Massachusetts*, off Vera Cruz, about 20 or 30 miles. Norther blowing.

"March 5. Vera Cruz in sight. Anchored at Anton Lizards about noon. . . . General Scott with Generals Patterson, Pillow, and Worth and their respective staffs, all went on board the steamer *Champion* to run along the coast and 'look at it.' Passed around Sacrificio Island and within about a mile and a half of the castle. As we turned the point of the long reef on which the castle stands, Colonel Totten, looking with his glass, said he thought they were 'manning their batteries.' Col. P. F. Smith looked and said, 'They are using their sponges: we shall have a shot presently.' Sure enough! A small white cloud told us that we had become an object of interest to them. It was a shell and fell short. Another fell short. Another burst high in air, the pieces scattering and threatening us. The fourth passed directly over us and fell in the water a hundred yards beyond. We were in a ridiculous position. Commodore Connor had stopped the boat and we were in danger with no adequate object, without means of defence, with all of our officers of rank on board. If a chance shot had struck our engine we should have cut a pretty figure!

<sup>1</sup> While at Lobos the diarist received a playful-serious letter from Theodore Parker on the resemblance between Spinoza and Swedenborg. After premising that "they both make the world a sort of Dutch clock," he approves of the kind of pantheism which they and "E. A. H." had found and cherished. Another letter from Mr. Parker is on Alchemy. In replying to the same correspondent Feb. 27th, Colonel Hitchcock says: "I coincide with you in your views of this abominable war. Humble as I am, I wish not to fall a victim to this war without entering my protest against it as unjust on our part and needlessly and wickedly brought about. I am here, not from choice, but because, being in this army, it is my duty to obey the constituted authorities. As an individual I condemn, I abominate this war: as a member of the government I must go with it until our authorities are brought back to a sense of justice."



"Anton Lizards (anchorage off Vera Cruz), March 8, by candle-light in the morning. From Tampico we came back to Lobos Island, one third of the way down, and remained there from 21st Feb. to 2d March, when we came here. The fleet with troops and supplies had increased at Lobos to about 60, and now reaches about 80 vessels. Only two thirds of the force up. We are now running up to Sacrificio Island, three miles south of Vera Cruz, where a landing is to be attempted to-day by order of General Scott. He is impatient to get ashore. As an accident may happen to me, I note that I owe my servant \$36 to the 1st inst."

This morning candle-light chronicle is long and elaborate. Colonel Hitchcock repeats injunctions concerning his property and the care of his brother's family. He passes his favorite books in affectionate review, expressing his special gratitude to his brother Samuel for translating Spinoza, the first translation of the works of the mystical Dutch philosopher ever made in English. And after declaring that he is satisfied with his opinions on religion he closes and carefully affixes his name.

## CHAPTER XXXII

LANDING OF AMERICAN TROOPS. FORTY-FIVE VESSELS IN THE OFFING. CHARACTERISTIC AND AMUSING REMARKS BY GENERAL SCOTT. INVESTMENT OF THE CITY. TERRORS OF THE BOMBARDMENT. SURRENDER OF VERA CRUZ AND CASTLE OF SAN JUAN D'ULLOA. SKILL AND ACTIVITY OF R. E. LEE. FACING TOWARDS JALAPA.

**I**N these early March days the diary is filled with evidences of activity and anxiety, of thoughtful prophecy and deliberate haste, of comment on things laid aside to remain with the fleet, and on things packed up for the difficult invasion of the country.

“10th March, A.M. Clear fine day, warm and still. The castle and city in view from our anchorage. Our troops made their first landing last evening about 5 o'clock. Some 3000 went ashore in boats under the immediate orders of General Worth.

“Not a gun fired!

“In the course of the night nearly the whole of the second and third lines were landed. It was very exciting. Reports of a battery on shore to oppose us had been received yesterday. What reception the troops would meet with was doubtful up to the moment of landing. The *New Orleans* came up from Anton Lizards with 700 men of General Quitman's brigade on board. There are forty-five vessels with troops at Anton Lizards.

“13th March, P.M. The General and staff landed on the 10th towards evening, and on reaching the shore heard sundry particulars of skirmishes of no importance the night the first troops landed. On the 10th and 11th our troops extended the line of investment about five miles, in doing which they drove small parties of the enemy from valley and hill, killing

several, and losing two. Yesterday we had a severe 'norther,' during which I rode on horseback to the right of the third line,—General Twiggs's. It was the most severe ride I ever performed, on account of the terrible violence with which the sand was blown. Some of the sand-hills are 300 feet above the sea, two or two and a half miles from the city. To-day our line is finished from sea to sea around the city,<sup>1</sup> cutting off all communication with the country. We also turned off the water of the aqueduct which supplies the principal water used in the city.

"14th March. Yesterday some of the heavy guns and mortars were landed. Work goes on slowly. The General has given me charge of the provost guard and the examination of all suspected persons brought in. I have had several in hand.

"15th March. The norther has finally died out, but a heavy surf rolls on the beach and we may not be able to do much to-day. Only two mortars landed as yet. Slow work. Country completely cut off from city. All roads strongly guarded. A thousand Mexicans reported advancing from Jalapa. It might be good policy to let them in.

"P.M. Rode this A.M. from head-quarters (the right of our line of investment) to the left on the sea north of Vera Cruz. Preceded General Scott, but returned with him and staff. The road from Mexico comes in from the left of the line and is now strongly occupied by General Twiggs. Next to Twiggs in the line is General Quitman and then Generals Shields, Pillow and Worth—the latter on the extreme left. General Patterson commands a division of three brigades, the centre of the line. The line passes over sand-hills and through ravines and is very difficult to travel. But I am in better health.

"News came that General Taylor had defeated Santa Anna

<sup>1</sup> "From the first," writes Scott in his *Autobiography*, "my hope had been to capture the castle under the shelter of and through the city. This plan I never submitted to discussion. Several generals and colonels solicited the privilege of leading storming parties. The applicants were thanked and applauded—nothing more. In my little cabinet, however, consisting of Col. Totten, Chief Engineer, Lieut.-Col. Hitchcock, acting Inspector-General, Capt. R. E. Lee, Engineer, and First Lieutenant Henry L. Scott, acting Adjutant-General, I entered fully into the question of storming parties and regular siege approaches."



Feb. 23, at Buena Vista, as we anticipated, judging from Santa Anna's own report that he had 'transferred' his army. General T. lost 700 in killed and wounded. Santa Anna's loss, 4000. T. had only about 6000; Santa Anna nearly 17,000.

"16th. Before Vera Cruz. Cold, rainy day. Wind still from north but not strong. Surf high. No business. Occasional guns, as usual, from city and castle. Yesterday two shells came near head-quarters. One passed over and burst in sand-bank. Lieut. George B. McClellan came in this evening with a working party. His clothes were very much torn, and he said laughing that the Mexicans had been firing at his party nearly all day without hitting a man. . . . There has been considerable musketry firing.

"17th. I rode yesterday seven miles along the line to General Twiggs's quarters. The path has been considerably opened, but as yet blind and difficult in places. The Orizaba road is the least effectively defended part of the line and I requested General Patterson to strengthen it. He ordered Major Abercrombie at it at once. I also turned back two 6-pounders going to Twiggs—more needed elsewhere.

"Everybody is anxious to hear the guns of our heavy artillery against the walls of the city, but each wishes a breach opposite his own troops in the line. More mortars landed yesterday—some say all our mortars (ten) are on shore. We have two (or four) 24-pounder battering pieces with two (or four) 8-inch howitzers. Vessels with others have not arrived.

"18th. Rode again to the left of the line and back—14 miles in all. Want of provision and impatience of delay are prominent. General Twiggs particularly uncomfortable—very complaining, but has a bad cold. Visited advanced picket, three quarters of a mile from city—had a fine view.

"I recommended to the General to-day the seizure of all the boats at Antiqua, and further that one or two well manned boats from the navy should be stationed at General Twiggs's head-quarters (on the beach north of Vera Cruz) to intercept boats to and from the city.

"19th. A funny scene occurred last evening that would require a Dickens or a Lever to describe. The General called for his letter-book to show me a letter from himself to

Commodore Connor.<sup>1</sup> It had been copied by an interpreter, 'Colonel' Edmonson. An error was discovered, and the General broke out: 'Colonel Edmonson! Colonel Edmonson!' (in rapid succession) 'did you copy this?'

" 'Yes, sir.'

" 'My dear Colonel! That is not right; that interlineation should be *there*' (pointing with his finger) 'and not *there*, don't you see? The sense requires it. I never wrote it so! It is not sense! You make me write nonsense! You will kill me! I'll commit suicide, if you don't follow me. Follow *me*, no matter where I go—follow me, if out of a third-story window. I'll commit suicide if you don't! I pledge you my honor I will! I'll not survive it. What? Send that nonsense to the government? My dear Colonel! Don't you attempt to correct me! And here again—over here—there should be a period and not a semicolon. The capital letter shows it. How *could* you make it a semicolon? Correct that on your life.'

" 'I'll correct it immediately!' exclaims the Colonel.

" 'And *there* you've left a space at the beginning of the line! That shows a new sentence; but there was none—it was all one sentence in the original! *Never* leave a space at the beginning of a line except when beginning a new sentence. There! You've put a "g" in Colonel Hardin's name—I'll bet a thousand—ten thousand dollars to one farthing there was no "g" in the original. I'll agree to be shot tomorrow morning if I put a "g" in the original. Follow me—follow me, if out of a third story-window. I'll kill myself if you don't! I'll kill six others and then kill myself! I'll not survive it. I'll die before I send such a copy to the government! What would be said of me? That I write nonsense and don't know how to spell Colonel Hardin's name! Hardin—d-i-n—there is no "g" in it, and never was! No matter how strange the spelling—follow *me*! Don't you attempt to correct my spelling!'

"This is about a fourth part of what he said of the same sort, and, what made it more funny, it was when time pressed; important orders were in progress to open the trenches. The work has now begun.

<sup>1</sup> Commander of the American squadron in the Gulf.



“The sun is out, and it is calm. The ten mortars were on shore yesterday and two 8-inch howitzers. The four, 24-pounders will be landed to-day.

“20th March. Yesterday an exciting day. Our working parties had broke ground the night before within 600 yards of the wall of the city, and had so covered themselves as to be able to work all day yesterday. The guns of the city were directed towards them and kept up a constant firing—400 discharges some idle fellow counted yesterday. They were shells and round shot, yet so completely were our parties covered, under the judicious arrangements of the engineers who laid out the work, that not a single man was hit.

“Capt. R. E. Lee,<sup>1</sup> one of the engineers, and an admirable officer, had a narrow escape with his life yesterday. Returning from a working party with Lieut. P. T. Beauregard, he turned a point in the path in the bushes, and suddenly came upon one of our soldiers who no doubt mistook him for a Mexican and the soldier challenged ‘Who comes there?’ ‘Friends!’ said Captain Lee. ‘Officers,’ said Beauregard at the same time, but the soldier, in trepidation and haste, levelled a pistol at Lee and fired. The ball passed between his left arm and body,—the flame singeing his coat, he was so near. The General was very angry, and would not listen to Lee’s intercession in behalf of the man.

“Last evening some stir was made by scattering musket shots fired from outside of our lines, just to annoy us.

“21st March. Rode to left of the line yesterday. News has come of proceedings of Congress. Colonels Benton and Cumming are appointed major-generals, and Cadwalader, Hopping, and Pierce brigadiers! The three-million bill for making peace with Mexico has passed. Have sent a brief of the news to the left of the line. . . . Another norther on; 240 heavy guns yesterday upon one of our working parties produced no effect. General Scott feels the course of Mr. Polk in relation to Colonel Benton and himself, and he has a right to.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Scott attributed the fall of Vera Cruz to the skill and activity of Captain Lee.

<sup>2</sup> It was understood that the President did not like to have two Whigs, like Taylor and Scott, in command in Mexico, and that he would take advantage of the slightest failure of any sort to appoint Benton in command of the army to supersede Scott.



"22d March A.M. The sun shines brightly but is destined to be obscured by the vomiting forth of our mortar batteries upon what General Scott calls in his prepared summons the 'beautiful' city of Vera Cruz. Our heavy guns are not in position, but they will be ready in the coming twenty-four hours. We have ten 10-inch mortar batteries in place for bombarding the city, and the General intends, I believe, to send this morning a summons to the governor to surrender. He will decline, and the mortars will open. We have been thirteen days before the city without firing a gun upon it. Our troops had some little skirmishing in extending themselves around the city, and one or two very trifling skirmishes since with small reconnoitring parties. The city, however, has belched forth its sulphurous contents in almost continual discharges of heavy mortars and paixhans. During the last three days they have been constantly firing at our working parties in the trenches, which have been within 600 yards of the city walls, but they have not touched a single man in the trenches and only one out of them. One man was killed yesterday by a stone knocked off the wall of the cemetery by a heavy ball. During last night, while our people were hauling mortars into place, a fire was kept up from the city, the effect of which has not been reported.

"The morning finds everything remarkably quiet—one of those mild, calm, sweet summer mornings that incline a contemplative man to religious reflection. One is disposed to feel thankful for mere existence. I am not well, however,—had a fever yesterday.

"4 P.M. I am seated on a sand-hill on the shore, between Sacrificios anchorage (full of ships) and the city, which, like the castle, is in sight. The U. S. ship *Ohio* (74) arrived to-day and is now firing a salute at anchor near Green Island. General Scott is mounted, and, accompanied by Surgeon-General Lawson, is waiting an answer to his summons to the city to surrender. The scene is impressive.

"6.30 P.M., at my tent. As I sat on the sand-hill I saw the bearer of the flag return and deliver a letter to the General. The interpreter read it and the General and party rode from the beach to camp. I followed on foot, but soon heard guns from the city which assured me of the nature of the answer.

As I entered the camp I heard, more explicitly, that the answer was, as expected, a refusal to surrender. I then went to the top of a high sand-hill where a number of officers had assembled, and, in some half an hour, saw the white cloud of one of our mortars. Six were fired in rapid succession, and then the roar of guns continued and continues from our batteries, the city, and the castle. Seven gunboats have hauled up near enough and are delivering, from one heavy gun each, their shot into the city under fire of the castle.

"As I stood on the sand-hill and saw the artillery belching forth its lightning, I could not but feel how very absurd is the whole tragical farce of war!

"Before Vera Cruz, March 23, A.M. Saw the firing till near midnight, and again this morning at daylight. Our mortars fired all night, but the gunboats drew off and then the castle and the city ceased firing. This A.M. the firing has been very heavy until our gunboats withdrew. Captain John R. Vinton was killed by a 32-pound shot at our mortar battery.<sup>1</sup> Vinton was a classmate of mine at the Military Academy. He was a man of considerable talent and stood high in the army and was very much respected in private life. Was a warm advocate of Polk's policy.

"P.M. A heavy norther. Surf high and may prevent the landing of shells, of which our ten mortars are in need. The ship *Charles* arrived yesterday, with 18 additional mortars. . . . A few men wounded. . . . Last evening we had a stampede, on a report that 2000 men were about to attack our right. A small fuss. I would neither order my horse saddled nor buckled on my sword, so sure that it was a ridiculously false alarm.

"Camp Washington, Before Vera Cruz, March 25, A.M. Three 32s and three 8-in. paixhans from the navy, under direction of naval officers and men, were landed and opened upon the batteries of the city yesterday about 10 A.M., and continued firing till about 4, when they exhausted their ammunition. The whole fire of the city was drawn upon the battery, which was constructed by Captain Lee of the engineers. Five men have been killed there, but it has the honor of having

<sup>1</sup> "In seige of Vera Cruz, killed by wind of a shell," says the *Military Register*.



cut down the Mexican flag and twice silenced a heavy battery known as the 'Red fort.'

"Commodore Perry—a brother of the Lake Erie hero—has relieved Commodore Connor. His naval battery is doing great work.

"26th. Very severe norther. Sand flies horribly. There have been two skirmishes with small bodies of Mexicans back of (outside of) our line of circumvallation. Several killed and wounded. . . . Parties are hanging on our rear. General La Vega is only a few miles distant, with several thousand men, 't is said.

"1 P.M. Early this morning a white flag was sent from the city with a communication. I was sent to see the bearer of the flag. He told me it was from General Landero, the second in command. I asked if General Landero was authorized to make any proposition and received the assurance that he was, as the commandant, General Morales, was sick. I then accompanied him to head-quarters. Here he produced a letter from the foreign consuls in Vera Cruz asking General Scott to allow foreigners and women and children to leave the city.

"General Scott answered that he could not allow any one to leave the city. As this was made known to the commandant, his application, made this forenoon, for the appointment of three commissioners on each side, must be considered as an offer of surrender,<sup>1</sup> though it is made ostensibly to grow out of the letter of the consuls. Generals Worth and Pillow and Colonel Totten have been appointed to meet three Mexican commissioners. All firing has ceased. I was told by the flag-bearer this morning that the castle is subordinate to the city commander. We shall certainly have the city to-day or to-morrow; as for the castle—we shall see.

"27th. 12 M. The conference yesterday was not successful and the negotiation was in reality broken off. But our commissioners received an offer of surrender from the Mexicans, which, they said, they would convey to our General, but not as commissioners. In the latter capacity their own proposi-

<sup>1</sup> "In two days the sailors fired 1300 rounds, reducing the wall to rubbish and making a breach fifty feet wide, enabling Scott's army to dictate terms and proceed to the interior."—Appleton's *Cyclo. Am. Biog.*



tion had been refused and they had no orders to receive our proposition. General Scott had required a surrender of arms, and that the Mexican private soldiers should be sent to the U. S. and the officers to go on parole. The Mexicans rejected these terms, but were willing to surrender the city and castle (tho' they doubted whether the castle commander would not set up for himself and hold out) the troops marching out with arms, drums, etc., as at Monterey. Our General refuses this, but would relax in the articles requiring the prisoners to be sent to the United States, and would leave the *manner* of delivering up arms to the commissioners.

"The commissioners again assembled to-day about 11 A.M., and are now engaged in business. *Nous verrons*.

"12 P.M. It is midnight and the articles of capitulation are signed, and the United States forces are to occupy the city of Vera Cruz, the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa and dependencies the day after to-morrow.

"Camp Washington, before Vera Cruz, March 28, A.M. The sun has come out in splendor; it is mild, and very still. The city of Vera Cruz and the celebrated castle capitulated last evening and our troops are to occupy the same at 10 A.M. to-morrow. I shall never forget the horrible fire of our mortars . . . going with dreadful certainty and bursting with sepulchral tones often in the centre of private dwellings—it was awful. I shudder to think of it.

"29th March, A.M. A very fine morning. As Inspector-General I am to receive this morning the parole from the prisoners of war after they march out of the city and stack arms. I have already one assistant and three others are ordered to report to me.

"Later. These Mexicans are the devil for rank. 'T is said there are here 5 generals, 18 colonels, 37 lieutenant-colonels, 5 majors, 90 captains, 180 lieutenants.

"Of these General Scott as an act of grace and policy grants freedom to 1 general, 2 colonels, 4 lieutenant-colonels, 1 major, 10 captains, and 20 lieutenants; and he intends to send them to Mexico to use a peace influence, if they will.

"Vera Cruz, 5 P.M. Our troops occupy to-day both the city and castle. The Mexican troops marched out at 10 A.M. and stacked arms. It became my duty, with several assis-

tants, to receive the paroles of the commanders of regiments and corps for themselves and their commands—also the generals and staff officers. The city is virtually in ruins. Some buildings were set afire and nothing remains but blackened walls. Others are shattered and scattered in fragments. Street pavements are torn up from end to end. . . . Few remained except the poorest people and the soldiers—the latter as miserable-looking wretches as I ever laid my eyes upon.

“31st March. Have moved my tent to the suburbs in preference to living in the city, which is very offensive and must soon be sickly. Stench intolerable in some quarters. Visited the ‘castle’ to-day. There are about 250 guns in the city and at the castle ready for use, and over 100 dismounted, and a very large supply of ammunition.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII

RECONNOITRING THE ENEMY. JEALOUSY OF SENIOR OFFICERS.

A PASS THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS. VICTORY OF CERRO GORDO. IMMENSE CAPTURE OF PRISONERS, ARMS, AND MUNITIONS

ON the 1st of April, 1847, the victorious army of General Scott began a week of well earned rest, meantime quietly putting itself in order for an advance towards the city of Mexico, *via* Jalapa northward. Colonel Hitchcock now took up systematically the study of Spanish, and he drew up and entered in his diary formidable vocabularies of words and phrases, with their English equivalents. This he seems to have continued with considerable persistence while the war progressed. It should be noted that the unfriendliness which had seemed to exist at times between the commander of the army and Colonel Hitchcock had entirely vanished, and had been followed by mutual confidence and a warm esteem. For the first time they became well acquainted. Cordiality and amity had been firmly established and continued to increase during life.

"9th Apr. General Twiggs with his division of regulars marched yesterday for Jalapa. To-day Pillow and Shields followed suit with two brigades of volunteers. Reports conflicting. It is said that Santa Anna, defeated by General Taylor, returned to the city of Mexico with 4000 troops and has now reached Jalapa with 12,000 and is fortifying a very strong pass some forty miles from here. Others report an unknown force. General Scott is still here with Worth's division of regulars and Quitman's brigade of volunteers. S. lacks sufficient transportation for troops, but told me this morning that he would go forward himself if he heard of opposition at the pass.



“ 10 A.M. Packing up a shirt to be off with General Scott to meet Santa Anna—a fight or a treaty.

“ 7 P.M. A dreadful scene at 5 P.M.—the hanging of a man for rape.

“ 12th Apr. Letter from Twiggs, in advance. Anticipates opposition at the pass about noon to-day. Thinks he can overcome it. The General says he will move at twenty minutes' notice. I am ready.

“ Plan del Rio (Level of River), Apr. 15, 7 P.M. Raining. The Gen'l and a part of his staff, including myself, left Vera Cruz towards the evening of 12th and yesterday we arrived here, where Twiggs and Patterson had halted. The road—all the way very hot and dusty—here enters some remarkable passes in the mountains which are strongly occupied by Santa Anna with 12,000 to 18,000 men and a considerable number of pieces of artillery—not fewer than 25, many of them 16-pounders. Captain Lee has been out all day searching for a path or passes by which the forts on the heights can be turned. Reports not wholly favorable. We must take some time to study the ground here and devise a mode of attack.

“ 16th.  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 1 P.M. We hear firing in the direction of our reconnoitring parties. Only a few discharges of cannon. Ceased.

“ 9 P.M. Just returned to my tent from a long conference at the General's *hut*. Reconnoitring parties all present. Lee, Derby, and others have made the boldest examinations and have given us a great deal of information. Enemy very strong on main road. . . . But the plan to turn him seems plausible and a favorable result is highly probable. We shall wait a night for the arrival of General Worth with 1600 picked men and a section of siege train—twelve 24-pounders and one 8-inch howitzer.

“ 17th, A.M. After conference last evening I came to my tent, made a brief note, and lay down. Was awakened by the sound of wagons, and, looking out, could distinguish a field battery passing along the road. General Twiggs spoke from his tent and told me that Worth had arrived. I am ordered to advance at 8 in the morning. There is great jealousy among the senior officers. General Patterson (sick) reports for duty at the last hour. General Shields claims some

command in the advance. General Pillow, though assigned to lead the attack, intimates very plainly that he considers it a desperate undertaking. General Scott told him that the attack in the rear would distract the attention of the enemy and make an opening for him. General Pillow said he would go where ordered if he left his bones there, but asked the General to consider that two of his regiments were raw and without service. General Scott said that the regulars were very much 'diluted' with raw recruits, not so good as raw militia just from home. Saying something about discipline, General Scott insisted that the attack in front must be made.

" $\frac{1}{4}$  before 12 M. Just returned to the 'Level of the Road' from seeing Twiggs with his division at the place leading from the main road some three miles from here, by which it is hoped he may get into the rear of the enemy. At one point on the road the guns of one of the enemy's batteries seemed to look directly upon us within reach. They did not fire. I now hear firing—evidently from the enemy. Very important events must occur within the next twenty-four hours.

"5 P.M. A good deal of cannon firing. General Twiggs has sent back to h'd-q'rs. three or four reports. The enemy has discovered his movement and is firing on him. Has driven the enemy. Wanted reinforcements. Sent him two or three regiments of Shields's brigade, so that he has 4000 or 5000, mostly regulars. Sent in one prisoner who says he ran away from the Mexicans—'did n't want to be shot.'

"Plan del Rio, 9 P.M., 18th of April, 1847. We have had a most remarkable day. The stronghold of the Mexicans in the pass of Cerro Gordo has been assaulted and carried. Santa Anna commanded in person with many thousand troops and a large quantity of heavy artillery; but he has been utterly defeated and routed, and, though he himself escaped, his splendid carriage, his military chest with \$25,000, his portfolio, five of his general officers, and about 3000 troops, 4000 stand of arms, and forty odd cannon have fallen into our hands. It has certainly been one of the most extraordinary assaults ever made by any troops. We had about 8000 men; the Mexicans not less than 12,000 and probably from 15,000 to 18,000.

"The main road from Vera Cruz to Jalapa (pronounced



Halapa) enters at this place some mountain passes winding in such a manner that in several places artillery properly placed can sweep it for a great distance. Heavy guns were in position for this purpose and several (five, I believe) heights were occupied with artillery commanding the country in every direction. The most distant hill occupied must be 500 to 700 feet high and is of a sugar-loaf form. Some 1500 Mexicans with small arms and several pieces of artillery crowned its summit. Its sides were completely cleared of obstructions and the Mexicans might well suppose it inaccessible to an enemy. Our troops, however, passed up its precipitous sides, and, taking possession of its guns, turned them with terrible effect upon the enemy beyond and below. Santa Anna had his own tent near by and fled in haste towards Jalapa. The possession of this hill cut off all the troops in the several forts along the road and these all surrendered at discretion. General La Vega, taken by General Taylor at Resaca de la Palma last year, is again our prisoner.

“The enemy thought it impossible to attack his rear and prepared his defences against an advance along the main road; and had 50,000 men attempted this, they must have been destroyed. With infinite labor we made a sort of road turning to the right from the main road in advance of the enemy’s works and out of his sight, and, by carrying this road around some two or three miles, we came in view of the rear conical hill, the highest and most commanding of all his defences. This hill was scaled by our troops and taken, when the labor of merely climbing it is alone sufficient to break down any but a tolerably strong man.

“We left here (the General and his staff) about  $\frac{1}{2}$  after 7 this morning, and were under fire about 9 o’clock. I do not remember the precise hour of carrying the hill, but think it was about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 or perhaps 11 o’clock. The main height being carried, all of the other works fell as a matter of course. The scene was very striking. The country for many miles around was imposing and sublime. A horse was killed by a cannon shot about a rod from the General, but no other casualties immediately near occurred. . . . The assault was made exclusively by regulars. . . . In an assault troops must not halt. Their only safety is in advancing. . . . Our



prisoners are brought here to be disposed of, while our advance, in pursuit of the flying enemy, has gone on towards Jalapa."

"20th April, A.M. General Scott and several of his staff, including myself, are at the beautiful hacienda of Santa Anna, about seven miles from (east of) Jalapa. Reached here last evening, after a ride of fifteen miles from the defile of Plan del Rio. This is a princely place. The country is quite elevated and continues to rise to the west, with mountains in the distance. The buildings are of the soft limestone of this range. Santa Anna and his flying troops were pursued to this place, where General Twiggs remained the night after the battle, and yesterday our advance forces entered Jalapa. General Scott, after the battle, went back with his prisoners, about 3000, to Plan del Rio, where yesterday morning I received their paroles of honor not to serve till exchanged, and dismissed them. The General mounted near 2 P.M. and came here.

"Santa Anna's property here was put under the protection of a guard by our advance and nothing has been injured. It is full of very rich prints hanging on the walls of nearly all the rooms; but everything is foreign—nothing shows the genius of the Mexicans—no works of art or evidences of science. A large chapel is in course of building near the palace."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

INCESSANT ACTIVITY OF THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL. PROCLAMATION TO THE MEXICANS. TWO THIRDS OF THE WAY TO THE CAPITAL. AT PUEBLA. WORTH INSUBORDINATE, REPRI-MANDED. A ROBBER CHIEF. REINFORCEMENTS DELAYED. TREATY-MAKERS AT WORK.

**I**T will be noticed that this detailed and voluminous diary makes very brief allusion to the professional duties of the writer of it. He is Scott's Inspector-General, and, having stated that fact, Colonel Hitchcock seldom reverts to it. To the layman it may not mean much, but the military reader will understand that he was at the front,—one of the busiest men in the army and one of its most important functionaries. His duty was to see that the whole command was constantly ready for battle: that rifles were always in order; that batteries were always serviceable; that tents were in repair; that animals were cared for; that camps were in sanitary location and condition. He often ordered brigades and divisions out for a sudden inspection of arms and accoutrements. He sometimes examined muskets and cartridge-boxes. His activity was incessant. His eye had to be on every regiment and company,—occasionally on every soldier. Unless he had performed conscientiously his complicated duties the command would have got out of order in a short time. His business was fearlessly to criticise everything and everybody and to report to the General-in-Chief. So, if he is not often mentioned in his account of these battles of Mexico it must be attributed in part to his modesty, which is sufficiently apparent in this diary, and in part to the fact that he is constantly busy with details as the man behind the machine that does the work.

“Jalapa (one third of the way to the capital), April 20, 9 P.M. Since 9 this morning we have been in the city. It

is one of the most remarkable incidents of my life, considered in connection with the fight day before yesterday. The Mexicans thought that success for us at Cerro Gordo was impossible. Their defeat is proportionally disheartening. The next pass, ten miles west of here, is said to be abandoned. Consternation has spread over the country. The Mexicans are confounded—lost in wonder and despair. . . . Grass grows in many of the streets of Jalapa. . . .

“Jalapa, Apr. 24. Yes; General Worth reports that the strong pass, ten miles ahead, is abandoned and the guns spiked. He broke the trunions from the guns and continued his march to Perote, where he arrived on the 22d at noon, and, strange to say, this, one of the strongholds of Mexico, was also abandoned. The enemy left an officer to turn over the public property and regular invoices were handed to General Worth. In this property, 54 cannon were delivered, mostly of small calibre but in good service order, the heavy guns having, we hear, been taken to the pass of Cerro Gordo. One 24-pounder, captured, is inscribed ‘The Terror of the North Americans.’

“Jalapa, May 5. General Scott has issued an order materially changing his operations. Instead of going forward with the 3000 ‘old volunteers,’ he has concluded to discharge them at the end of the year of enlistment, which expires in about five weeks. Some will re-enter the service ‘for the war.’

“May 12. The Bishop of Puebla has sent a confidential agent, one Antonio Campos, to General Scott to procure a proclamation of a particular character which he offers to send to the city of Mexico to bring about peace. The General at first was timid about issuing a proclamation and hesitated to do so, and I thereupon drew up the annexed note to him, which, I verily believe, has had no little weight in inducing him to sign the proclamation. It has this morning been despatched by special courier to Puebla and will be in Mexico the day after to-morrow. The next day, the 15th, there is to be an election of President by the Mexican Congress, and the bishop wishes this proclamation to be used to influence the election. All agree that Santa Anna must be put to death or at least driven out of the country before there can be a peace or any security even in an armistice.”



The "annexed note" referred to, written to give General Scott some reason for signing the proclamation, is as follows:

"Col. H. would remark that, as a movement has evidently commenced among the Mexicans themselves, it may be of the last importance to cultivate it by all complaisance consistent with principle; that those who have begun this movement will work with more zeal if indulged at first; that, if not checked at first, but encouraged, their interest in it will grow with the work itself, until they fully commit themselves to the objects so important to us. If the clergy can be conciliated by a proclamation, it seems a small price for so great an advantage to let them please themselves by adapting it to their knowledge of their people. I would not consider it a product of the English language or regard it with American eyes in any other sense than to see that no fact is misstated and no principle violated. I am convinced that it will be found effective."

"Jalapa, May 14. Only a part of the supply train has come: a part of the quartermaster's funds. The General will have to use money for the pay department. We must keep good our credit. . . .

"15th May. The General is much in the habit of assembling in the evening the heads of the general staff departments around his supper-table about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8, and then talking of public business till 11 or 12 o'clock. If there be pressing occasion, he talks only of business, inquiring into supplies, health, etc., but occasionally he merely talks, absorbing the whole conversation—tells stories, etc. Last evening he talked till 11 o'clock, about business exclusively. The contents of the train made his subject. About  $\frac{1}{4}$  of what was expected has arrived. It is the general opinion that most of the paroled troops of Cerro Gordo are in front of us again, and are disputing General Worth's entrance into Puebla. We think that such troops as Santa Anna has cannot fight. They are mostly either paroled men or undisciplined and ignorant people, most likely pressed into the service.

"22d May. News direct from General Worth—a private letter from him to General Scott dated 19th. Reports his entrance into Puebla on the 15th. Santa Anna supposed to have gone into Mexico. Worth states that he obtained a copy

of the proclamation (suggested by Campos) and that his third edition of it is nearly exhausted, that his door is thronged with applicants for it, and that it had struck a heavier blow than any from Palo Alto to Cerro Gordo. I almost feel as if I had induced the General to put forth that proclamation.

“P.M. General Twiggs’s division has just started for Puebla. A Mexican officer on parole arrived to-day from Puebla and says that General Worth is in quiet possession of the city, that perfect order prevails, and that our officers are riding in carriages with ladies about the city. . . . He says that General Worth first entered Puebla with only 70 dragoons and rode around seeing that everything was in order, and then brought in his army and took possession of all commanding heights. The people complained bitterly of guerillas. . . .

“Puebla, May 28. (Two thirds of the way to the capital.) It is near 11 P.M. and I have opened my note-book—but how can I record the events or the feelings of the last few days! General Scott and staff, with an escort of four companies of dragoons, left Jalapa the 23d inst. and arrived here to-day. We have fought no more battles. But we have visited the castle of Perote after passing La Hoya, both of which the enemy at once abandoned after the battle of Cerro Gordo. We have entered this city of 75,000 inhabitants—one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. The advance of our army also entered, almost without opposition. Some eight or ten miles back, General Worth dispersed a body of cavalry with a few light artillery shots and took quiet possession. What with excitement at the mere novelty of the thing, our singular position, and the magnitude of the responsibilities devolving upon us, I think I shall not sleep to-night.

“ $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 A.M. Awakened by a band serenading the General, but I do not enjoy the music, for I cannot conceal from myself that this army is in a critical situation. . . . There is a great deal of sickness, some 400 being on the sick report. The General said this (last) evening that he could not leave here with over 4000 men in marching upon Mexico and there is information, greatly relied on, that the enemy already has 7000 regulars to oppose us, with about 15,000 irregulars or national guards, and these increasing by quotas from neighboring cities. A successful battle might leave us



less than 4000 men with which to enter the capital of a very hostile country, that city alone containing 150,000 inhabitants. . . . The quartermaster (Captain Irwin) says he cannot raise funds to keep up the credit of the government. He is in great despondency. The General may have to resort to forced loans—something he dreads.

“Puebla, May 29th. Arose early and went with Colonel Graham to the cathedral,—the most imposing building I have ever seen. It is many churches in one, where the devotees bow in front of various altars. It is a magnificent pile, and the tradition that angels began it and constructed a good portion has given Puebla the alternative pseudonym of ‘The City of the Angels.’

“ $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 P.M. An exciting day. Air full of rumors of menacing movements. An army of 20,000 men said to be within one day’s march. The advancing column of General Twiggs with wagon trains ‘will be attacked,’ they also say. The camp was put in order for defence. General Twiggs came in all right. A Frenchman arrived just from Mexico, for whose veracity a Mr. Wise vouched, and said there are no troops this side of that city and only six or eight thousand there. A few minutes ago a man came in and reported hearing the report of artillery, probably an attack on Captain Kearney’s advanced company about ten miles west. I thought it not worth while to wake the General on so idle a tale and went to sleep again.”

While the army was detained at Puebla harmony was broken by the insubordinate conduct of brevet Brigadier-General Worth. Having been sent on from Jalapa in advance by General Scott he took possession of the city with more “pomp and circumstance” than the occasion called for, and seems to have assumed for the time the powers and the airs of a Spanish generalissimo. He granted terms of capitulation which General Scott at once found to be inadmissible, and he issued a general-order circular charging the Mexicans with a plot to poison the army. These he did not send to the General-in-Chief, and, being reprimanded by him for his conduct, demanded a trial by a military court of inquiry. The demand was granted; the trial of Worth was had, and the court on June 24th found that the terms of capitulation



were "improvident and detrimental to the public service," and that the circular was "highly improper and extremely objectionable." Worth angrily resented the finding of his peers and appealed to Washington to give him justice.

"Sunday evening, 30th May. A semicircle of mountains is on the north and west—Orizaba, Popocatepetl, etc.,—all constantly covered with snow. Puebla contains some seventy or eighty thousand people. Buildings all of stone, the finest and largest being religious edifices.

"Puebla, May 31.—Last evening came from two sources the proclamation of Santa Anna (in print) to the Mexican Congress, renouncing the presidency of the republic. He alleges that his Mexican enemies will not fight the invaders and that they have so far succeeded in defaming him that his usefulness to his country is at an end. He exults in his own devotion to Mexico, and alludes to our proclamation issued from Jalapa. The election for President of the country took place on the 15th; he may have news that he is not elected, or he may hope that Congress, ignoring the election, will declare him dictator. Great confusion is said to prevail at the capital, and it is even intimated that Mexico will receive us as protectors. I cannot believe it!

"Puebla, 5th June, A.M. I have taken into service a very extraordinary person—a Mexican, rather portly for one of his profession, but with a keen, active eye and evidently 'bold as a lion' or an honest man. He has been a very celebrated captain of robbers and knows the band and the whole country. I have engaged him to carry a letter to the commanding officer at Jalapa, and if he performs the service faithfully, I shall further employ him.

"Puebla, 6th June. The air is full of rumors every day. Reinforcements coming to us; enemy concentrating in front; our wagon train cut off with half a million of money. Something is in the wind.

"7th. The government paper at Washington, to exalt the energy of the administration, says that we have now 20,000 men! We have barely 6000. Reinforcements to the number of 20,000 are reported as 'on the way.' Investigation shows that there are two thousand!"

"Puebla, 9th June. Everything now shows that we are

to have a fight before reaching the capital. . . . General Alvarez with 3000 men is reported within 20 miles of us, making his way to our rear to intercept our train or supporting force. If he falls in with the latter, he will probably be beaten, but if he strikes a small train he may do us mischief. Other information (from the same source) is that we are being assailed from all quarters and that 30,000 men are coming upon us.

"Puebla, 12th June. . . . Meantime I must note that Mr. Thornton of the British Legation in Mexico left that city at 5 P.M. of the day before yesterday and I found him in conversation with General Scott about 4 P.M. yesterday. He said he had overtaken several Frenchmen on the road armed for defence against robbers, and had come in with them. He came at the instance of the English Minister, Mr. Bankhead, who, it appears, has been written to by Mr. Nicholas P. Trist,<sup>1</sup> now here as a commissioner to make a treaty. Mr. Bankhead sends word to General Scott that the English Government had offered its mediation, and that our government, while declining to accept it, had acknowledged a willingness that the English Government should exert its 'good offices' with Mexico. Mr. Thornton seems to think that no government exists in this country competent to make a peace. . . . We had already known that Santa Anna renounced office in a formal letter to Congress and that Congress had passed a resolution not to open the vote for the new President (who ought to be installed on June 15th) until next September, and not to inaugurate the new President till January. Santa Anna has recalled his resignation to meet existing emergencies and therefore he is now a dictator by virtue of a revolution. . . .

"Mr. Thornton did not allude to troops having left the city of Mexico, but said that those there for the defence of the city would not make a stand against even 3000 men;

<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of War directed Mr. Trist to act on the suggestion of General Pillow, and then directed General Scott to take his military orders from Mr. Trist, a private citizen appointed commissioner! Scott wrote defiantly refusing to obey Trist, and said, "I suppose this is the second attempt of the kind ever made to dishonor a General-in-Chief in the field, before or since the French Convention," the other being the effort to compel General Taylor to take orders from a Mr. Donaldson.

that there would be no fight there; that many people wished us there—all who had property, etc. . . . Various reports that troops have left Mexico for this vicinity.

“13th June. Reported that a body of the enemy is at Cholula, six or seven miles from here, very celebrated in the history of the Spanish conquest under Cortez. . . . Our wagon-train has been repeatedly attacked, but will probably get in all right.

“Puebla, June 18th, 1847. Some four or five days ago, or nights, rather, I was kept awake, thinking of the affairs of Mexico, until after midnight, when, finding I could not sleep, I rose and lit my candle and wrote a sort of address to the Mexican people, running through several pages—about five sheets of paper, indeed. The next morning I hinted my wish to publish it, and the General, after looking at it, was very willing, and said some clever things of it. It was accordingly translated into Spanish and makes a neat pamphlet. The American paper published here on the 16th inst. printed both the English and Spanish versions.”



## CHAPTER XXXV

HITCHCOCK'S STIRRING APPEAL TO MEXICANS. DOMINGUEZ AND THE SPY COMPANY. SANTA ANNA SUMMONS HIS CONGRESS. HAMPERED BY ADMINISTRATION, SCOTT DEMANDS RECALL. BRITISH INTRIGUES. CONFERENCE OF SCOTT'S GENERALS. RESORT TO BRIBERY

IN the library where General Hitchcock's copious diary and multitudinous papers are preserved is found a very brown copy of "*The American Star*, No. 2, Puebla, Mexico, June 16, 1847," containing this letter of his in English and Spanish. As there was of course no "w" or "k" in the Spanish font of type that had been captured, the type-setter was reduced to sad extremities. The "k" seems to have been whittled out of an "h," for the occasion; the "w" was made by setting together two "v's". One of the sentences gives an idea of the typographic difficulties: "I vvill begin and vvill end vvith nothing but facts vvell vvorth your attention." In this appeal Colonel Hitchcock adopted a familiar conversational style, wisely treating his readers somewhat like full-grown children, often beginning a sentence with "Now listen to me," "Attend to what I am saying," "Now consider," "Hear this, for it is the truth," "Mexicans, be not deceived," "I put it to your feelings!", "now listen to this!" The letter would make about ten pages of this book. Its purpose was to prove that the Americans were wholly right in their war of invasion, and that all reasonable Mexicans would concede the fact! Another incidental effect of the letter was to demonstrate that the writer was wholly wrong in his opinion of the invasion both before it began and after it ended! But these "Remarks Addressed to the People of Mexico" were not in the interest of the author of them; they were written in behalf of his country and of the Commander-in-Chief.

The points made may be briefly summarized: In 1824 Mexico established a government after the United States model, in which each state elected its own governor; in 1834, Santa Anna broke it up, established a central government and appointed the governors himself; Zacatecas and Texas resisted the usurpation; Texas declared independence, and beat the army of Santa Anna at San Jacinto, and took him prisoner; Santa Anna's officers, under his orders, massacred 500 Texans at Goliad after surrender; Texas, being now independent, applied for admission to the United States, which refused and postponed the act for ten years; the war between Mexico and Texas abolished all boundaries; we sent a Minister to Mexico to agree on the boundary; he was repelled; we then sent an "Army of Occupation" to the Rio Grande; the Mexicans crossed the river and assaulted us; they were beaten and have been beaten ever since, though Santa Anna boasts of victories: "we have not a particle of ill-will towards you—we treat you with all civility—we are not in fact your enemies; we do not plunder your people or insult your women or your religion; an accomplished and beautiful woman, the lovely daughter of our Commander-in-Chief, died recently in a Catholic convent in the United States, under the sanctified rites of the Catholic Church"; "we are here for no earthly purpose except the hope of obtaining a peace."

This shrewdly drawn appeal to the people was printed by the ten thousand and widely circulated along the line of march.

"Puebla, 20th June. The Mexican robber-chief Dominguez, whom I sent with a letter of General Scott's to Jalapa and Vera Cruz on the 3d, has got back here bringing a return despatch from Colonel Childs. . . . Through this man I am anxious to make an arrangement to this effect: that, for a sum of money yet to be determined, the robbers shall let our people pass without molestation and that they shall, for extra compensation, furnish us with guides, couriers, and spies.

"Puebla, 23d June. The robber Dominguez is a very curious and interesting man. When General Worth first arrived here, some person pointed out this man as a great robber and desired that he might be seized. He was living quietly with his family here, the people fearing him or the laws being

powerless in regard to him. General Worth arrested him, but, after a few days, sent to him saying that he was arrested on complaint of his own people, and, giving him to understand that he had no friends among the Mexicans, offered to take him into our service. The plan took, and when General Scott arrived, he at once sent Dominguez to me.

"I tried him and found him faithful. When I settled with him, paying him about \$110, including his outfit, I suggested his bringing into our service the whole band of professional robbers that line the road from Mexico to Vera Cruz. He assented, but frankly spoke of the difficulty of giving security for their good faith and honesty. I told him to think the matter over and we would talk again.

"The next day, Major Smith's interpreter (Mr. Spooner) recognized our Dominguez as the fellow who had robbed him on the highway! Dominguez took \$5 from him and gave him a pass of protection from other robbers.

"Last evening we saw Dominguez again and engaged five of his men at \$2 a day, with himself at \$3 a day. I told Dominguez to find out how many men he can control on the road. He thinks some 300. I have ordered the five men in different directions for information.

"Puebla, 25th June. Yesterday Mr. Thornton, Secretary of the British Legation in Mexico, came here from the city and informed General Scott that, when leaving here a few days ago, Mr. Trist sent by him to Mexico a letter from the American Secretary of State to the Mexican Secretary of State containing some 'proposals,' and that Santa Anna had called an extraordinary session of Congress to lay the proposals before it. Santa Anna gave Mr. Thornton a passport to come here, so that, just at this moment, the prospect leans a little towards an accommodation. If our train gets up safely, with the 3000 or 3500 men we expect with it, the Mexican Congress may think it best to come to terms.

"26th June. This morning I brought twelve from the city prison into the presence of my Dominguez and saw a most extraordinary meeting. Dominguez met some of his friends for the first time for years—men with whom he had doubtless been engaged in many an adventure, perhaps highway robbery. They embraced and swore eternal fidelity



to each other and to the United States. I remanded them to prison, saying that I would report their cases to the General and ask their release.

"June 28, and I did report to the General, who ordered their release. I distributed about \$50 among them and last evening I arranged with Dominguez that he should forthwith enroll about 200 of them. They are to be formed into companies and to operate under the orders of the General. We are to pay \$20 a month to each man and they find everything. Each man counts, in fact, two for us, for if we did not employ them the enemy would; so that one detached from the enemy and transferred to us makes a difference of two in our favor. Dominguez says he will bring over the guerillas to our side or seize their chiefs and bring them prisoners to our general, etc., etc.

"30th June. Last evening the General-in-Chief called together Generals Quitman, Twiggs, and Smith and several colonels and majors, and stated the details of the plan for employing the Mexican robber-band. They expressed themselves unanimously and warmly in its favor, and discussed their wages, etc.

"Puebla, July 8, '47. The great train of wagons, upward of 500, arrived to-day with an escort of 4000 men under General Pillow. General Cadwalader has also come up. General Shields, who was wounded at Cerro Gordo and left at Jalapa, has recovered and has also come to head-quarters. The mail came, or a part of it, last evening.

"July 11. The news from Mexico forebodes anything but peace. The Congress of Mexico lacks 11 of a quorum; so it will not probably be in power to act on the nomination of commissioners. With this news, we hear that Santa Anna has over 20,000 men under arms, well clad and full of confidence in our defeat. With this state of things no negotiations can take place. General Pierce is coming up to us from Vera Cruz, and then, about 10 days hence, we shall probably move forward and try our strength with Santa Anna. We may have 9000 men to march with, though this is uncertain."

Considering its environments and its comparative weakness, the army had made surprising progress, but General Scott was not happy. He asserted to his staff that the adminis-

tration had done "everything it could" to hamper and delay him: and it most certainly had failed to send the abundant reinforcements which it had promised; it had withheld ammunition and supplies; it had appointed its partisan parasites to harass and to watch him, and it now deliberately proposed to supersede him, and appoint in his place Senator Thomas H. Benton as Lieutenant-General in command of the armies in Mexico! At this juncture General Scott made a brief summary of his annoyances and sent it to Washington with his resignation, saying, "Considering the many cruel disappointments and mortifications that I have been made to feel I beg to be recalled." This vigorous anticipation of the plan to degrade him made the Benton scheme obviously preposterous, brought upon it ridicule, and it was dropped at Washington and the General-in-Chief was permitted to push on.

"July 12. Appearances grow more warlike every day. The news from Mexico does not look towards peace; but, on the contrary, extensive means of defence are supposed to be in the capital—20,000 to 25,000 men, and sixty pieces of artillery. The men well fed and paid. They may not be disciplined or instructed. A flag of truce goes to-day to demand the return of certain prisoners taken near Saltillo.

"Puebla, July 16. Always darkest just before morning. Reported that Santa Anna has called all the guerilla parties to Mexico and that he has nearly 30,000 men for the defence of the capital. This may be or may not be. Meantime it is whispered that the English merchants in Mexico are extremely anxious for a peace, and that they say a peace can be had for a little money. I understand that the money may be had. It is now 1 to 1 that there will be a peace.

"Puebla, July 18. Make a mark here, for this morning our eyes are greeted with a view of Popocatepetl in action. The snow is disappearing on its summit and black volumes of smoke are sent up from the great deep within. This city is in sight of four enormous snow-capped peaks. . . .

"Night before last General Scott assembled his chief officers at his quarters to 'post them up' he said—Generals Pillow, Quitman, Twiggs, Shields, and Cadwalader. General Worth was at his quarters and General Smith was sick. The General called me into the circle. He stated that General Pierce was



on his way here from Vera Cruz with 2200 men, and in his opinion we ought to wait his arrival, even if it should require a delay of a fortnight. Some expressed decided assent. Nobody objected.

“The General also mentioned that it had been intimated from the capital through a very reliable channel that money was all that was needed to bring Santa Anna to terms; that he, General Scott, had conversed on the subject with the American commissioner, Mr. Trist, and had agreed to furnish the money on Mr. Trist's asking for it as a necessary step in the negotiations; that Mr. Trist had replied that he had no specific instructions to meet such a contingency, but he was induced to believe it necessary and would take the responsibility; that \$10,000 had actually been despatched to a particular individual in the government (not Santa Anna); and that, in addition to this, the sum of one million dollars had been placed in position in the capital, to be offered from a secret service fund (not to be alluded to in the treaty); but this sum is not to pass under the orders of Santa Anna till the treaty shall be formally ratified. When this was fully explained, General Pillow came out very fully and eloquently in support of the measure, only stipulating, as a condition, that the United States should have such a treaty as was desired.

“General Quitman did not like the payment of money secretly as a bribe, and thought our people at home might not or would not approve of it; but he expressed himself very decidedly in approval of the motives which induced the measure and pledged himself to defend those motives. General Twiggs approved of the whole scheme. General Shields intimated doubts and misgivings about the million, and said that, as he knew nothing about the terms of the proposed treaty, he could give no opinion; he might perhaps dissent from the treaty itself, but he seemed entirely willing that the matter should be disposed of by Commissioner Trist, wishing, apparently as a matter of personal friendship, that General Scott should have nothing to do with disposing of the million. To this the General (Scott) explained that, though he approved of the use of the million, and would under all circumstances defend Mr. Trist in that use of it, still the use proposed was a matter for Mr. Trist to determine altogether by himself, and that he, General Scott,



offered the money from the contingent fund only because Mr. Trist could not do it. General Cadwalader was partially appealed to by General Shields for an opinion; but General Twiggs had arisen and taken his hat to take leave, and it was quite late and signs of retiring were visible all around the table, so that General C. merely remarked that enough had been said, and so said nothing.

"It was represented that Santa Anna was disposed to make a treaty, but could not do it with safety to himself and the preservation of the government without having means at his disposal to 'satisfy' certain persons of influence who looked for a consideration of some sort, according to what was represented to Mr. Trist as a custom universally obtaining in Mexico. The agents assured Mr. Trist that no business could be done with any Mexican functionary without a bribe—and that a million of money was a prerequisite. General Scott said that he would not tempt the fidelity or patriotism of any Mexican, but he knew of no code of morals which forbade profiting by a professed willingness to be bribed.

"Puebla, July 21st. This is the day when an answer is expected from Mexico. The English Minister is engaged in bringing about a peace.<sup>1</sup> He gives the opinion that a bribe is absolutely indispensable. The Spanish Minister is said to have given the same opinion. Our agents in this business are Englishmen.

"It is now said that the Mexican Congress had a quorum on the 13th and decided that it had no power to appoint commissioners to conclude a treaty of peace; that the President, Santa Anna, has all the necessary power, while Congress, like our Senate, has only an advisory word—to accept or reject the treaty when made.

"July 22, A.M. The Mexicans sent in a flag of truce this morning in answer to a 'demand' of our general some days ago. . . . A private letter from Mexico gives some prospect of peace. The time is critical. It is evident that we are soon to have peace or a prolonged war.

<sup>1</sup> In his diary some weeks later Colonel Hitchcock wrote: "But by this time Santa Anna had come to the conclusion that his army could not only keep us out of the capital but could cut us off from the coast, so the financial negotiation was broken off in a few days."

"Puebla, July 25, A.M. Yesterday a note was received from the capital, from Mr. T—to the effect that Santa Anna was in favor of peace, but could not induce Congress to repeal certain resolutions declaring it treason in or out of the government to offer to treat with us. These resolutions were passed *in a fury* immediately after the battle of Cerro Gordo. The note goes on to say that we must advance on the capital, and that we will be met by a flag before we reach the Piñon (a point fortified, on the main causeway, about nine miles from the city). . . .

"Puebla, July 26.  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 P.M., and the idea of peace is all knocked into a cocked hat. Reports come in of forces of Mexicans being in motion to cut off General Pierce, supposed to be on his way from Vera Cruz with 2000 men, and to be this side of Orizaba. General Smith has been despatched to his assistance. . . . If we can get Pierce here, we shall go on with some good men to try the strength of the capital.

"July 30. The general officers (except General Twiggs), each with a portion of his staff, dined yesterday with General Pillow. Present Generals Scott, Quitman, Shields, Cadwalader and Worth, with Commissioner Trist. The dinner 'went off' very well.

"Everything now shows that the Mexicans intend to carry on the war to the utmost of their ability, and the probability now is that our attempt to enter the capital will be met with most determined opposition. We shall have 8500 men: the Mexicans perhaps three times as many, with 80 to 100 pieces of artillery. . . . The trains have rendered the roads almost impassable, and the city can be surrounded with water, and all the great thoroughfares cut off by deep ditches and defended by artillery. The English Minister, Mr. Bankhead, thinks that our advance to Chalco would bring about a peace.

"Puebla, Mexico, Aug. 1, 1847 (Sunday). General Scott is here in person with about 11,000 men—some 2000 of them on sick report. General Pierce is coming from Vera Cruz with 2000 men. We hear that he is coming without a supply of money—the severest blow that we could receive. If we undertake to levy on the people for supplies or contributions

we arm the whole country against us. . . . Yesterday I visited historic Cholula with the General. He very properly called it the Etruria of Mexico.

"Puebla, Aug. 2. An American just out from the capital reports 30,000 men there—15,000 well drilled. Two batteries cover each causeway by which entrance to the city must be made. . . . They are fortifying Guadalupe, an elevation nearly north of the city and commanding it. We must take that. . . .

"Puebla, Aug. 5. The General is preparing the order for the commencement of the march on Mexico. To-day is Thursday; the movement of some division begins on Saturday; on Sunday the General himself follows with another division; on Monday and Tuesday, two other divisions in succession. Colonel Childs is to be left in command of the garrison here. . . . Major Gaines has escaped and come in. . . . A piping time for rumors: General Valencia is about to drive us out of here with 15,000 men; cavalry are galloping to cut off our retreat, etc., etc. . . . Letters received from Mexico say that Santa Anna has some 30,000 men made up of 5000 very good soldiers; 5000 tolerably good; 10,000 indifferent; and 10,000 bad. . . . Talked to-day with an intelligent Mexican who did not hesitate to say (and evidently with sincerity) that a defeat of our army would be the greatest calamity to Mexico; for Santa Anna would then be declared dictator, and there would be an end of all free government.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

FORWARD TO THE CAPITAL! FLANKING THE PIÑON. DETOUR TO SAN AUGUSTIN. VICTORY AT CONTRERAS IN SEVENTEEN MINUTES. BATTLES IN FRONT OF MEXICO. CONFERENCE FOR PEACE. THE FIELD REVIEWED

AT Puebla General Scott had now paused with his army more than two months waiting for reinforcements, provisions, money, and more favorable conditions in front. During this time the army had somewhat increased in numbers and effectiveness. The rest had furnished Colonel Hitchcock with a coveted opportunity to inspect the various commands, to get the army into fighting trim and keep it in order, and to prepare it for the inevitable advance. Little of this work is revealed in the diary, for the one thing which he almost entirely neglects to chronicle in his otherwise faithful note-books is his professional service. But enough is revealed to indicate that the Inspector-General was incessantly busy during these hot months of sojourn on the volcano-side, 80 miles east of Mexico, and from Vera Cruz to the capital hardly any of his written soliloquies contain discussions of Plato or Spinoza.

“Puebla, Aug. 7, near 9 P.M. I have prepared for a move tomorrow morning with General Scott. General Twiggs marched this morning at 7 o'clock. His division of 3000 men made a fine appearance. The four divisions, to move on successive days, may number 8500 men—a small force for the object we have in view. I see nothing to prevent a sanguinary conflict. The sentiment of the army is that we cannot afford to be beat, but *must* enter the capital.

“Puente Tesmoluca, Aug. 9, 1847. Arrived to-day within 8 miles of Rio Frio (Cold River). General Scott and his staff left Puebla yesterday with General Quitman's division, but

with a separate escort. He left General Q. to encamp some 10 or 11 miles from Puebla, and overtook General Twiggs, who left Puebla on the 7th, and encamped (or quartered) at San Martin. The valley and the tremendous mountain are never to be forgotten, but I have no time to note.

"Ayotla, Aug. 11. Arrived, with General Twiggs's division, at this, the last town on the road to Mexico, and only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Piñon, the main point of defence relied on by the Mexicans. General Quitman came up to Buena Vista (hacienda) some six miles from here just as General Scott continued on his route here. General S. left San Domingo (hacienda) this morning. We came in sight of the valley of Mexico yesterday, and a fine view indeed it was. We ascended for a distance of 7 or 8 miles from Rio Frio, at one or two points having a distant (obscure) view of the city itself. We ought to have attacked this morning, if not last night, but the Mexicans made no other move than sending a body of cavalry to look at us, and they ran off the moment Colonel Harney sent a party of dragoons after them. We are now on the borders of Lake Chalco, and I have seen the beautiful little islets, which, cultivated, one might suppose to be the identical 'floating gardens' we read of as existing in the time of the Montezumas.

"Aug. 12. The General sent out a party to reconnoitre the Piñon, and followed himself (and staff) soon after. The day was not perfectly clear, yet, as we came upon the great plain in which the city of Mexico stands, we could distinguish objects very clearly. First, in the midst of the plain rises a hill at least 500 feet—some think 700. This is the Piñon, which is fortified and covered with guns. To the north and south are lakes: the causeway to the city leads between the lakes and passes directly by the base of the Piñon on the north side. The Piñon is about 9 miles from the city. By stepping to the right we can catch a view of the two towers of the great cathedral. . . . The General and his staff were about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 miles from the Piñon. Half-way between us and the Piñon was the escort of the reconnoitring party—part of a regiment of artillery (as infantry) and two pieces of artillery. The engineers could be seen at points around with their glasses surveying the works in front. They went within half a mile of the foot of the Piñon and were not fired on. They tried

to draw the fire, to discover where the guns were and of what calibre. Immediately south is a volcanic mountain, silent, may be 1000 feet high, on top of which several of our officers are looking at the city. In our rear, at Ayotla, is Twiggs's division, and at Buena Vista, 7 miles, are Quitman's and Worth's divisions, the latter having marched from Rio Frio to the head of Lake Chalco. We suppose General Pillow has arrived at Rio Frio by this time. Each of these divisions is about 2500 strong. The enemy literally swarms at the Piñon.

"Ayotla, Aug. 13, A.M. Capt. Robert E. Lee, with an escort of one company of dragoons, made another reconnaissance yesterday afternoon, returning late. He had been in the direction of Mexicalcingo to see if the city cannot be entered from that way so as to leave the fortifications at the Piñon to the right. He could not push his observations far enough to determine. The report received last evening from a special runner (but not a very intelligent man) is that the route south of Lake Chalco is impracticable—boggy and very much cut up by gullies (barancas).

"Ayotla, Aug. 14. Yesterday General Scott and some of us of his staff rode to Chalco and found General Worth quartered there with his division. I found Captain Hooker of General Pillow's staff, led him at once to the General, and heard him report that General Pillow was near at hand in good order. Thus the rear has come up. On our return here we met General Pillow at the head of his column between Buena Vista and Chalco, his wagons very much strung out, but all coming on. No effort had been made to stop him. The reconnoitring party came in late. The General heard their several reports. Captain Lee had examined the vicinity of Mexicalcingo, some 13 miles from here, having Captain Mason and Lieutenant Pierre Toutant Beauregard with him. Lieutenant Stevens has been almost around the Piñon and was for several hours in the water within reach of fire, but the enemy took no notice of him. . . . Later: A disaster has occurred. Two of our small parties at a distance of a few miles from the army have been captured or dispersed, losing several killed. One incautiously visited a foundry to ascertain if we could get some shot and shell there, and the other was out after sheep. In the first affair, the natives in our service secured as trophies several lances,



each bearing a small flag; one which I have is about 12 x 18 inches and swallow-tailed, and is inscribed with a death's head and bones with the legend in Spanish, 'We give no quarter.'

"Ayotla, Aug. 15, A.M. The General received, last evening, from General Worth, who is at Chalco, the result of a reconnaissance on the road south of the lake, and Colonel Duncan, who conducted the reconnaissance, came with the report and added oral explanations. The route had been first in the General's mind as that by which he would advance upon the city; but he had heard such bad accounts of it that he had nearly abandoned all hope of using it and had actually laid down his plan of attack upon the batteries at Mexicalcingo, leaving the Piñon to the right. General Pillow was to come here to-day preparatory to taking position to-morrow in front of the Piñon, which the General intended to threaten by a display before it and then suddenly fall upon the batteries at Mexicalcingo. He was perfectly confident of success.

"Ochlomilcho, Aug. 17. Captain Lee's reconnaissance to-day has settled the route of advance in General Scott's mind. He is going southward of Chalco. He thinks he may have to fight the whole Mexican army at San Augustin, and it is now said by Mexicans (in captured mail from the city) to be 30,000 strong."

General Scott had made strong feints against the Piñon (near the national road) and Mexicalcingo, to deceive the enemy and detain his troops there; but he found there after personal inspection "a narrow causeway with swamps on both sides" and he says in his official report to the War Department, under this date: "Those difficulties, closely viewed, threw me back upon the project, long entertained, of turning the strong defences of the city by passing around south of Lake Chalco, so as to reach this point on land." The whole army was therefore moved by the left around Lake Chalco.

"San Augustin, Aug. 18, 1847. Headquarters arrived here this morning early from Ochlomilcho, where we stayed last night with General Pillow's division. General Worth came here with his division yesterday. Since getting here we have heard of the arrival of General Quitman at Ochlomilcho, and also General Twiggs, whose division brings up the rear. When

General Twiggs left Ayotla the day after we did (the 16th) he found a large body of the enemy apparently prepared to receive him. He fired six-pounders upon their advance and they retired. He thinks there were 1000 cavalry and nine battalions of infantry—several thousand men, while he had only 2300. The army moved around Chalco with considerable difficulty over a road thought by the Mexicans to be absolutely impracticable—so we hear.<sup>1</sup>

“This morning General Worth advanced some two miles towards San Antonio on the open road to Mexico (on our right) and came within range of some of the enemy's guns. One round shot killed Captain Thornton of the 2d Dragoons. Captain Lee of the Engineers reconnoitred part of a road in the hope of finding how San Antonio may be turned. His supporting party fell in with the enemy and killed several, taking five prisoners, and lost only one horse. .

“San Augustin, Aug. 19, early, and affairs present rather an uncomfortable aspect. We have no forage for our horses; our hard bread is getting musty; we have four days' rations for the army and some beef on the hoof. The defences of San Antonio are thought by General Worth to be too strong for an assault—that the taking of them would cripple the army. This opinion he gave to General Scott last evening when we were looking at their works, not over 1200 yards away. Our men were exposed on the wet ground before San Antonio, and the General-in-Chief appeared discouraged as we rode along the road lined with men, horses, and wagons—the men without tents, the evening almost cold and a menace of rain. . . . The route to San Antonio is almost impracticable, 't is said, and there is no certainty that we shall not find works of defence beyond in that direction equal to those here. The General thinks he can not carry his baggage-train if he goes that way, and to leave the train and siege-guns would require him to leave a division of troops.

“9 A.M. Our prospects rather darken every moment.

<sup>1</sup> The miracle of getting over this “impassable” region is thus explained by the imaginative writer of one of the letters from Mexico captured about this time by Scott's army: “It was declared to be impassable. But each man of eight or ten thousand Americans who had to pass that way took a bag of sand on his shoulders, so that on the way they mended the road as they went along with eight or ten thousand bags of sand!”



Now is the time for the General to keep cool! The enemy has evidently commenced firing upon General Worth's position and he can do nothing, while a report comes that the enemy has removed all but four guns from the Piñon. These guns, so removed, we must meet somewhere else. If now we go forward to San Angel, 5 miles by a difficult mountain road, the enemy may carry his guns to that place by a good road of only two miles. We now begin to see that, while we move over the arc of a circle surrounding the city, the enemy moves over a chord, and can concentrate at any point before we can reach it. The only advantage that we can expect is that the artificial defences are less complete south and west of the city. We are now, I believe, nearly southwest of the city, having passed over an almost impracticable road from Chalco, around the lake, at the foot of volcanic hills—a distance of fifteen or eighteen miles. This volcanic slag is terrible upon the feet of animals, upon our wagons, etc. The country is beautiful, with elements of sublimity, but we are not in the right state of mind to enjoy natural scenery.—Ping-bang! A gun, and more.

“San Augustin, Aug. 20, 7 A.M. The events of yesterday cannot be crowded into a small space. Rather early in the morning the enemy was seen to the left in the direction of San Angel, about four miles distant, and a report came that there were 10,000 men at the town. Then we heard that the advance of the enemy was several thousand, with five pieces of artillery. It turned out that they had at least twelve pieces, and perhaps twenty, some of them 9-pounders if not 16-pounders. Our General ordered General Pillow with his division to proceed in that direction and open a practicable road for our artillery, General Pillow to be covered by General Twiggs.

“5.20 P.M. I have just returned to San Augustin after a ride of some twenty miles. After writing the above paragraph I was suddenly called off and a multitude of events have happened since. It would take pages to record them. I can only outline them:

“I looked this morning from our house-top upon the field occupied by the enemy yesterday—and—but I am getting ahead of my story. First, General Twiggs and General Pillow



found the enemy with breastworks and artillery strongly posted to intercept our passage to San Angel. A scattering attack was begun and kept up many hours, from about 1 P.M. till dark.

"The General-in-Chief arrived on the field of battle at 3 P.M. of Aug. 19, precisely. I looked at my watch and made note of it—his position being on a hill commanding a magnificent view of the battle and of Mexico. We came up and it commenced raining. The work had not gone on well. A brigade under Riley had made a handsome movement, but, having no support, produced no results. Meantime the enemy, besides from 3000 to 5000 in their entrenchments, had an immense supporting force sent out from Mexico—not less than 12,000 and many think 15,000. They moved up in fine style in full view of General Scott, but did not join those in the fortifications. There was a small village interposed between the enemy's works and their supporting force which our troops occupied. The supporting force could have passed around the village, but did not.

"At night Captain Lee—'the' engineer—came to town to report to General Scott the opinion of General Persifer F. Smith that he could make a movement at 3 A.M. and storm the enemy's batteries. This plan was approved, and, though it was raining all night, Lee went back and at 3 o'clock this morning the movement commenced. Our troops passed around into the rear of the enemy under cover of night and defiled and reached a favorable position, with infinite labor, from which they advanced in two columns directly upon the enemy's batteries, which the Mexicans, strange to say, had left entirely open. Our troops rushed forward so rapidly that but a few shots were fired and the Mexicans were so much taken by surprise that their shots produced little effect, while their loss was immense.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the remarkable battle of Contreras. In General Hitchcock's elaborate introduction to a pamphlet of 32 pages, being *A Series of Intercepted Letters, Captured by the American Guard at Tacubaya, August, 1847, published by a wounded soldier*, he says of this affair: "Valencia's entrenched camp at Contreras was taken in seventeen minutes, by the watch, by about 1500 men, without artillery or cavalry,—he having 5000 men with twenty-three pieces of fine artillery, covered by about 2000 cavalry."

“It is a poetic fact in this affair that the two identical 6-pounders which the enemy captured at Buena Vista (lost with infinite honor) were here recaptured by the very regiment (4th Artillery) to which the guns had originally belonged! Captain Simon Dunn first laid hands upon the guns and recognized them. The works were taken with a dash, and besides the great number killed there were several hundred prisoners taken by us, including three generals. Among these is the General Salos, well known in the history of this war, who issued a proclamation authorizing guerilla parties and advocating the doctrine of showing ‘no quarter to the Yankees.’ If he were shot it might be just.

“This morning I looked upon the battle-field and saw the enemy in great force, and so reported to the General at about 5.30. Half an hour later I looked from the house-top with my glasses, and saw very clearly the whole movement of our troops—saw them debouch from the hills and pass down upon the enemy’s works—saw the enemy fire upon our troops, having turned his guns around for the purpose. I reported the movement to the General, but I told him I could not understand how our troops had got so far around to the enemy’s left and rear in an hour or two. About 9 A.M. the General rode with his staff out to the battle-field, and then planned an attack upon San Antonio (from the north), before which (on the south) Worth’s division was still lying. He intended to pass along the road to San Angel, and then use a cross-road which would place him in rear of the enemy’s works at San Antonio. Then he meant to summon the commander to surrender, Worth threatening the place in front. But Worth had already succeeded in turning the enemy’s left and throwing a brigade to the rear, and the enemy then abandoned his defences.

“The General had passed through San Angel when this state of things was reported. He then pushed on Twiggs with his division to attack a fortified convent about 500 yards (a quarter of a mile or so) from the junction of the San Angel road with that of San Antonio. The attack was begun at 12.45 P.M. and a tremendous fight came off. It lasted for two hours and three quarters, at the end of which time the batteries were silenced and taken and many prisoners



captured, including three more generals. Some important officers of state also fell into our hands, among them Amaya, the President's substitute elected by Congress after Cerro Gordo. While the battle was raging at the convent (enclosed by an immense stone wall and artificially fortified with great skill) the report came that General Worth was advancing down the San Antonio road, and would soon be in position to attack the enemy in flank.

"It turned out that, besides the work attacked by Twiggs, there was still another armed with heavy guns—a regular fortification with bastion fronts,—directly at the junction of the San Angel and San Antonio roads. This work was gallantly assaulted and taken after a desperate conflict, and its guns were immediately turned upon the work which was holding in check Twiggs's troops. This latter work then ceased firing and held out a white flag, surrendering at discretion.

"Meantime the General ordered two brigades—Pierce's and Shields's,—to pass to the left and get into the rear of the work attacked by Worth. This movement was made, and no doubt contributed to the success of the day, helping Worth and Worth's success helping Twiggs.

"On the whole, the events of the day have been—as the phrase is—'*glorious*' in the highest degree. We have lost very few men, considering the nature of the works attacked and the desperate defence made in the afternoon. I have heard of only five officers killed to-day. General Scott was slightly wounded during the battle, but said nothing of it at the moment. I only heard the balls whistle.<sup>1</sup>

"Coyoacan, 21st Aug., noon. The General and his staff had just arrived at this small collection of houses, between San Angel and Churubusco, and was about to proceed to Tacubaya, in the suburbs of the capital, when a fine carriage drove up and General Mora was presented to General Scott. All gave way at once for the interview between the two generals and Mr. Trist, the American commissioner. The Mexican handed a parcel to General Scott, who handed it over to Mr.

<sup>1</sup> From the official report of General Scott after the battle of Contreras: "To the staff attached to general head-quarters, I was again under high obligations for services in the field, as always in the bureaus. I add their names: Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock," etc.



Trist, who broke the seal and read the enclosure. The parties have now been in conference over half an hour under the shade of a tree. We outsiders suppose communications have been opened between the Mexican Government and ours, and we hope it may be the beginning of a peace. The army achieved wonders yesterday, and last night the English secretary of legation came to see General Scott at San Augustin, ostensibly to ask for a safeguard for the English Minister and British subjects, but really to prepare the way for peace. He said that the city was perfectly astounded at our success—that the greatest consternation pervades the capital.

“Tacubaya, Aug. 22. The General arrived here yesterday about 5 P.M., with his staff and an escort of cavalry, and took quarters in the bishop’s palace, about half or three quarters of a mile from Chapultepec—the hill which commands the city. The commandant of Chapultepec received orders from Mexico not to fire on us here, which fact was communicated by a flag towards evening. At this time General Worth’s division marched into this place; it was raining heavily and continued to rain till late at night. This morning the English courier came from the city and gave us unofficial intelligence that Santa Anna had appointed commissioners to arrange terms of an armistice, and he had come out at the request of the English consul to offer a house belonging to him as a convenient place for the meeting. Meantime a Mexican mail-carrier was intercepted by us, and he says that Santa Anna has not more than 4000 troops left out of the 20,000. I asked him what had become of them. He said they had ‘run away!’

“The officers are assembled in knots discussing the events of the 20th—certainly the most important that ever occupied the attention of an American army. There is a vast deal of discussion—and tolerably good feeling as yet, but developing points of difference which will grow into very grave matters. All agree that our troops outdid themselves, and fought as troops seldom ever did before. The Mexicans, too, fought as they have never before fought us—desperately and with immense loss. No estimate of the numbers of the enemy can be relied on, but all agree that the odds were immensely against us. The operations of the day must be regarded as

a unit, for probably no single success was wholly independent of some other success, unless we except the first event—the attack at about 6 A.M. upon Valencia's position (Contreras) some three and a half or four miles from San Augustin.

“To rehearse: In the morning of the day before yesterday, our troops were distributed as follows: General Pillow's, General Twiggs's, and half of General Quitman's divisions<sup>1</sup> were on the field in the presence of and threatening Valencia on the road from San Augustin to San Angel,—the space between Valencia's force and San Augustin being almost impassable with volcanic scoria; General Quitman was at San Augustin with one of his brigades; General Worth was menacing San Antonio two miles from San Augustin. The operations of the day commenced with an assault on Valencia's fort, which was carried with a loss on our side of less than 30 men. It was a surprise and proved a complete defeat, although, besides the 5000 men at the fort, there were the evening before 12,000 or 15,000 men within a mile and a half (towards Mexico). The reinforcements all retired (northeast) and took position at the defences at Churubusco and the *tête-de-pont*, which were very strong.

“When General Scott reached San Angel, about 11 A.M., he designed sending troops to the right, on the San Antonio road, to get in the rear of the troops at the very strong works at San Antonio, and had sent instructions to General Worth to threaten in front as soon as he should know of the movement in the rear. General Worth had discretionary orders to assail San Antonio if he could do so with advantage. He found that he could turn San Antonio himself and sent troops to the right (his left) for the purpose of doing so, which the enemy perceived and abandoned his works and was soon in full retreat from San Antonio. These troops united at Churubusco and the *tête-de-pont* with the large reinforcements originally intended for the support of Valencia, so that by about

<sup>1</sup> “This force had to cross what by the Mexicans is called Pedrigal, *i.e.*, a surface of volcanic scoria broken into every possible form, presenting sharp stones and deep fissures, exceedingly difficult for the passage of infantry, and impossible for that of cavalry except by a single road, in front of which, and perfectly commanding it, General Valencia had established an entrenched camp on elevated ground.”—*Hitchcock's Introduction to Captured Letters.*



noon the whole Mexican force was reassembled at those two places.

“In this state of things, General Scott determined to attack the works in his front, Twiggs and Pillow being up with him at San Angel, or, rather, at a small place in advance called Coyoacan, perhaps two miles from Churubusco. From Coyoacan onwards there were three roads: Twiggs advanced down the road directly towards Churubusco; Pillow turned off to the right to get on the flank; and Brigadier-Generals Pierce and Shields (the latter of Quitman’s division) went to the left to get on the other flank.

“Twiggs began the fight at Churubusco, about 12.45 P.M. He sent word that he was doing very well and needed no assistance, but soon called for aid. The General-in-Chief sent to General Twiggs Riley’s brigade (a part of Twiggs’s division), having despatched Pierce and Shields around to the left and rear. The firing was tremendous, both of heavy artillery and small arms. It continued more than an hour before we heard with certainty that General Worth had passed down the San Antonio road and was engaged with the enemy at the *tête-de-pont*. The firing was increased and widely spread out as Duncan’s field artillery (in General Worth’s division) with Taylor’s battery came into action near Twiggs’s position. The die was now cast and the critical moment had arrived. We must succeed or our army was lost.

“At about 3 P.M. the critical time was fully upon us, and known to be so. All of the available troops on our side had been ordered into the fight. No more aid could be given. General Quitman had one brigade at San Augustin, but it was evident that the day would be decided before any communication could be had with him.

“Here is the point at which to pause and consider the state of things: Our army numbers not more than 6000 engaged in the fight; or, besides Quitman’s brigade at San Augustin, there was a regiment of artillery at Valencia’s battle-ground in charge of some 900 prisoners and a large quantity of artillery and ammunition, and troops were also left by Worth at San Antonio. The enemy was very strongly fortified in two positions supporting each other with large reserves—in all, probably not less than 18,000 men. Worth’s



forces, coming down the road, finally carried the *tête-de-pont* by one of those gallant onsets which have distinguished the American army in so many instances, throughout this war. Our troops plunged into a wet ditch surrounding the enemy's works and, floundering through it, passed over the parapet of a regularly constructed work and at the point of the bayonet drove the enemy off. Some of the enemy's guns were then turned upon the flying Mexicans, and one, in particular, was turned upon Churubusco, much the strongest work and that against which Twiggs's division had been engaged about two hours. About the same time Colonel Duncan with his light battery took position on the road near the *tête-de-pont* and abreast of Churubusco; and as soon as he opened a heavy fire upon the latter place the enemy ceased firing and held out a white flag—all of those on the outside, who had been engaged with Shields and Pierce, breaking and dispersing."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

IN FULL VIEW OF MEXICO. SCOTT SUMMONS THE CITY. INTER-  
CEPTED LETTERS. RIVAL MEXICAN GENERALS. A WHITE  
FLAG FROM SANTA ANNA. DISORDERS IN THE CITY.  
FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS. ARMISTICE AT AN END

**I**N this single day, Scott's army, numbering about 6000 men, had stormed and captured four forts, defeated 25,000 men, taken 3000 prisoners, including eight generals (two of them ex-Presidents), killed and wounded 4000 of all ranks and captured thirty-seven cannon and much ammunition—"more than trebling our siege train and field batteries," says the General in his official report. The diary continues the story on August 22d.

"The victory was now complete. Our troops passed down the San Antonio road about two miles, until they came directly before and in full view of the city of Mexico, and a squadron of horse actually charged (up one of the causeways) to within twenty yards of the *gareta* (gate) of the city, and was recalled, it not being the intention of the General to go into the capital pell-mell. His plan seems to have been from the first to put the city in jeopardy and then to summon the government either to treat for peace or to surrender. He wrote the summons at San Augustin night before last on our return there after the battles, intending to send it into the city yesterday morning. Before he sent it, he was met by a commissioner, as before narrated.

"General Scott's summons is to the effect that blood enough has been shed, and he expresses his readiness to entertain the proposition for an armistice with a view to the consideration by the Mexican commissioner of the terms which our commissioner, Mr. Trist, may have to propose. The Mexican commissioner proposed an armistice of twelve months!—

which General Scott instantly rejected, and his own communication was then taken to the city of Mexico by the Mexican commissioner.

“In answer to this communication of General Scott commissioners have been appointed by Santa Anna to meet commissioners on our side at 4 P.M. to-day to arrange the terms of an armistice. And thus matters stand on Aug. 22d, at 12 noon, the hour at which I am writing.

“The capital of the Mexican republic is precisely northeast from the bishop’s palace at Tacubaya, where I am writing, and about two and one-half miles distant. Chapultepec is exactly north of me, about 900 yards—say half a mile. It is an isolated elevation of 150 feet, crowned with white, neat-looking buildings which constitute a military college. It is defended by ditches and artillery, but our engineers say it can readily be taken by us, and with our mortars upon that height we should command a great part of the city of Montezuma. General Scott intends to demand the evacuation of Chapultepec as a condition precedent to an armistice.

“As the Mexicans are notoriously better at negotiation than at fighting, our next steps are very important—but it would seem that the Mexican army is thoroughly beat and disorganized if not absolutely dispersed. We could have gone into the city night before last, and might go into it to-day, but it is better to hold our hands outside of the city to give the government an opportunity of treating for peace. If we go into the city we drive *out* the only government—that of Santa Anna—with which a peace can be made.

“Half past 5 P.M., Aug. 22, at Tacubaya. The commissioners to discuss or determine the question of an armistice have just assembled. They were to meet at 4 o’clock, but some delays have occurred, I think on our side. General Quitman had to come from San Augustin and General Pierce, lamed from the fall of his horse, was detained. These two and General Smith are the three commissioners on our side.

“This morning a Mexican mail was intercepted, and the contents are very striking. The mail was for Morelia, some sixty leagues towards the north, and left the capital this morning with many letters written yesterday, the 21st, the day of the principal fights. They all show the extreme



desperation to which the Mexican cause is reduced. Some of them contain expressions of almost piercing despair. Some are full of complaints—against the Mexican officers and the army generally, against Santa Anna, against Valencia, etc. But the most important items are allusions to the proposed armistice, showing that the Mexicans hope by means of it to gain time to collect their scattered forces and still defend the city; though they say that we could now be in the city if we had pleased. I have showed the principal letters on this point to General Smith, one of our commissioners. The most candid of the letters, to all appearances, state that the Mexican army was 30,000 strong; that Valencia had 5000 men with him at the village of Contreras (where General Smith defeated him); that General Santa Anna had 12,000 in his neighborhood for the support of Valencia, but gave him no support; that the remnant of the Mexican army does not exceed 8000 (some say less); that their best troops and nearly all of their artillery have been lost.”

These forty-five private letters were shortly printed, with a six-page introduction by Colonel Hitchcock. They are filled with lamentations of woe and reproaches of cowardice against the Mexican army: “God will pity our misery.” “This must be a curse of Heaven.” “Trust in God and He will take care of us.” “The temples were full of Mexicans praying to God for a triumph of our arms.” “We are in the last struggles of the drowned.” “Beloved Cantita: God permits things to go to a certain point in order to undeceive us, and then sends consolation. The Eternal and Incomprehensible will protect us.” “The God of Heaven alone can save us. His Divine Majesty has sent these devils to punish us for our sins.” “God seems to have written against us the words of the feast of Belshazzar.” “Shame! Shame!” “Cowardice! Corruption!” “Santa Anna is generally accused of treason.” “They say Santa Anna has been bribed!” All these extracts from several letters seem very incoherent; but if the frenzied populace had known of the appropriation of a million dollars of American money to the secret fund at Puebla on July 16th, for the use of Santa Anna, they would doubtless have hanged that gentleman before our troops entered the capital.

“Tacubaya, Aug. 26, A.M. The armistice was agreed to and copies exchanged the day before yesterday. Rumors fly in all directions and of all kinds. The most important seem to be the state of parties among the Mexicans—not merely in their capital, but everywhere. We hear that Valencia has ‘pronounced,’ as they call it, against Santa Anna; that Paredes has returned, landing at Vera Cruz incognito, and is now associating with Canalizo at Atlixco, plotting against Santa Anna; that Almonte is out against him, and one other whose name I do not remember.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Bustamente is said to have arrived at the capital with 4000 men, but no one knows where he or they came from. From all we hear at head-quarters one might think Santa Anna is really willing to enter into terms with us, but that the different factions in the country will oppose it, not from patriotism but from fear that the *pecuniary benefits* as well as power may accrue altogether to Santa Anna.

“While I write I am struck with the magnificence of the morning, as the majestic sun rises clear nearly in front of my window, through which I have Chapultepec in full illumination, with the city of Montezuma a little to the right. Vegetation under my window exceedingly rich; many fruits: apples, not very good; very good peaches and fine bananas. Green peas for dinner yesterday; corn always in season. What a country to dream in!

“Tacubaya, Aug. 27, A.M. Yesterday an attempt was made by us to send into Mexico a considerable wagon-train to bring out supplies (especially specie, to be furnished by capitalists upon drafts on the U. S. Government, by our paymasters, quartermasters, and commissioners). The train was turned back at the *gareta* (city gate,) but immediately following its return hither a Mexican officer came with apologies from Santa Anna, and some misunderstanding being admitted, the thing passed over. No other attempt was made yesterday, but to-day another trial is being undertaken. If Santa Anna allows specie to come to this army, he either intends to make peace or he fears our power to enter the city with arms. The specie we expect to obtain is said to

<sup>1</sup> On this day Colonel Hitchcock found among the multitude of Scott's prisoners of war twenty-nine generals!



be buried or hid in the city; otherwise it would probably have been seized before this time.

“Yesterday towards evening a white flag came from Santa Anna announcing the appointment of commissioners to meet our commissioner, Mr. Trist, on the subject of peace and appointing this village as the place of meeting. To assemble at 4 P.M. to-day—an odd hour. . . . At one moment yesterday I almost thought the armistice at an end. Several persons came in, about the same time, and reported that the Mexicans were at work on their batteries at the *garetas*, and something was said about forces coming into the city—all contrary to the terms of the armistice. It was about 3 P.M. The General was very much excited and he declared that if they violated one article of the armistice there was no reason why he should observe the article requiring ‘two days’ notice from either party to terminate it. He sent for persons to inquire into the facts alleged, and at the same time directed his Adjutant-General to notify the commanders of divisions to be in readiness to move upon the city. The General intended to notify Santa Anna that the armistice, being broken by him, was at an end, and then plunge upon the city. But in a short time an intelligent Englishman came in, directly from the city, by the nearest *gareta*, and contradicted the stories. To-day will be a test day. If specie comes—well.

“12 M. Reports are coming in that our wagon-train in the city has been attacked by the populace and that three wagoners have been killed with stones from the house-tops. Those who hear the reports cry out, ‘Let’s go into the city at once!’ but the General will wait for very certain intelligence, and if Santa Anna endeavors to protect the train he may not consider the case desperate. All cities are liable to popular excitements. Two of the commissioners it appears are Generals Herrera and Mora, and it is impossible that Santa Anna could have better showed a sincere disposition for peace than by the appointment of these men. Still, affairs are in a very critical state.

“Tacubaya, Aug. 28—morning—and a splendid morning it is. But our affairs are very much darkened. Yesterday assurances came, and they were perfectly satisfactory, that



Santa Anna and the government, so to speak, did all they could to suppress the disorders in the city; but at night it became equally certain that there is not power in the government sufficient to restrain the mob, which, it appears, is exasperated at the idea of our wagons coming into the Grand Plaza of the capital of Mexico—where, nevertheless, they did go.

“It is true, they did not load. They were advised by a Mexican general officer that it would be prudent to withdraw and take their loading outside of the city. They withdrew accordingly, but our agents found it impossible to hire a single cart or any other means of taking anything from the city, where we have both bacon and flour already ours by contract. As to money, we expected to obtain yesterday at least \$300,000; and that only as a beginning. Instead of this, Mr. Hargous, the agent, came out about 11 P.M. and brought with him in a private carriage in the night \$12,000 in silver, \$2000 in gold, and a draft on San Angel for \$7000 (\$21,000). This hardly equals a day’s expenses. Mr. H. represents the popular excitement as intense, and says they had a regular plan to let the wagons load up and then attack them. This was fortunately frustrated, but it leaves our affairs in a very bad state, and may compel the General to break off negotiations and break into the city.

“Tacubaya, Aug. 29, A.M. Yesterday the commissioners had their second meeting, and in the evening our commissioner returned well satisfied with indications, saying that the Mexican commissioners had used the most special endeavors to convince him of the good faith of the Mexican Government in the matter of the armistice, and that the mob in the city (attack on our wagons) was wholly unlooked-for and deeply regretted, etc., etc. There is to be no meeting to-day, but to-morrow, Monday, the commissioners are to have full powers to treat for peace.

“In the afternoon, however, Mr. Turnbull, an English merchant, called upon General Scott after coming through the city of Mexico, and he assured the General that, according to well-founded opinions in Mexico, Santa Anna would require, as a *sine qua non*, that the Nueces should be the boundary. If so, no peace can be had.

"Aug. 30, 6 P.M. A brilliant sunset in the west submerges the city of Montezuma. The city seems full of spires and domes and very white. Clouds rest upon the mountains bounding the valley of Mexico, so that Popocatapetl is not visible.

"Tacubaya, Aug. 31. The last day of Summer. Morning, and indescribably beautiful. The sun is brilliantly rising, the atmosphere is bland, and all is quiet. Birds are singing. Mountains distinctly visible.

"Public affairs in a very critical state. We hear that the fragments of Santa Anna's army brought together make a force of some 18,000 men, more than double our army. 'T is said that he reviewed his army yesterday, and it made an imposing show. Our agent has brought from the city \$151,000 in specie and a considerable quantity of rations. This has been done under an article of the armistice, and our people engaged in it in the city are under the protection of a Mexican guard. When was anything of the sort ever before known in the history of war?

"The commissioners did not meet yesterday, but our commissioner was not displeased at it. He tells me that the British consul comes to see him, and thus a communication is kept up, and he thinks the outlook favorable to peace. We hear, however, that the Mexican states are declaring against a peace: no matter, if Santa Anna chooses to make one. Our commissioner is authorized to pay out at once *three millions*, and this will enable Santa Anna to pay his army and thus hold him in power. Besides, more money is to be paid, we hear, on the ratification of the treaty.

"Tacubaya, Sept. 1, 1847. The first day of Fall. Yesterday was consecrated to rumors. It was said that a forage party, escorted by a squadron of dragoons, was cut off by the enemy near Toluca. It was said that the enemy in the city had been hard at work on the fortifications, contrary to the terms of the armistice. It was said that several thousand additional troops had arrived there, and one 24-pounder. It was said that the principal generals of the Mexican army had had a secret meeting for the purpose of opposing Santa Anna and the peace.

"The dragoon report turns out to be false and the govern-



ment of Toluca particularly civil. The fortifications story is denied by some who have seen the places where the work is said to have been done. The troop story ends in this: that about 400 of Valencia's dispersed soldiers found their way back to the city; and if they have not come '30 leagues' it is not a violation of the armistice. The 'secret meeting' was a called meeting at which Santa Anna presided, the particulars of which he reported indirectly to our commissioner last evening by means of the British consul.

"Tacubaya, Sept. 2, A.M. The peace stock rose somewhat yesterday evening when our commissioner came home, with Major Van Buren<sup>1</sup> who is a kind of associate (silent) commissioner, by request of General Scott and perhaps Mr. T. They were in very good humor and expressed strong hopes, but did not state the grounds of it. This morning, however, the supply-agent, Mr. Hargous, came out of town exceedingly embittered. He brought \$175,000 in silver and about 100 mule-loads of provision; but he says that a party of Mexicans broke into his supply store last night and robbed him extensively. *He* thinks there can be no peace.

"3d Sept., A.M., and the peace prospects have diminished. No new facts are known, but Mr. Trist came home last evening evidently dispirited and unusually fatigued, and his appearance is a kind of thermometer to us.

"4th Sept. Yesterday there was no meeting of the commissioners, Mr. Trist giving the Mexicans a day to consider an important point. So Major Van Buren told me, but did not tell me the point. If the comrs. meet to-day an important step may be taken one way or the other—for peace or war.

"Tacubaya, Sept. 5th, A.M. General Scott broke up house-keeping, so to speak, the day before yesterday, and the bishop's palace was assigned as quarters for a regiment.

"3 P.M. Reports last evening and this morning are most decidedly opposed to peace. It is said that a council in the city has decided to reject the propositions of our government; and Gen. Scott says that, should such a decision be announced, he will give notice to terminate the armistice to Mr. Trist, to be delivered to-morrow at the meeting of the comms.

"This is a matter of sincere regret, be the consequences

<sup>1</sup>Abraham, son of Martin Van Buren.



what they may. I never was in favor of this war, and have hoped, within a few days, that the end of it was near. I have not relied much on it, though. The pride of this people is very great, and that pride has been wounded: this will probably go further to continue the war than any injustice of which they complain.

"6th Sept., A.M. The elements of war seem entirely uppermost. To-day the refusal of the Mexican Government to accept the terms of peace proposed through our commissioner will be, it is expected, made known; and our commissioner is to be provided with a notice from our General terminating the armistice, the notice to be handed to the Mexican commissioners at the conclusion of the conference. Two days must then expire, at the end of which time hostilities are to recommence.

"3 P.M. It may be taken for granted that the armistice is at an end, though this is not yet officially pronounced. Our money agent, who has brought out some \$450,000, had yet nearly \$300,000 ready to come out, but the Mexican authorities have, on various pretexts, prevented its leaving during three days past—ever since they knew of the ultimatum of Mr. Trist. The agent came out of the city himself this morning and brought \$15,000 clandestinely, and states that he has distributed the balance among friends in the city for safety. He thinks he may get out a few more thousands this afternoon, but it is uncertain. Meantime, General Scott has given notice of the termination of the armistice on the ground that it has been violated by the Mexicans fortifying, contrary to the articles of the armistice, and in detaining our supplies, also contrary, etc., etc. The General has given the Mexican Government till noon to-morrow for any explanations it may have to make. Meantime, also, the respective commissioners are in session—or were an hour ago.

"This place, Tacubaya, is within a mile of Chapultepec and of course under fire from that hill. On the renewal of hostilities, therefore, we must immediately take that place and remove from this. It is said to be furnished with a system of mines.

"Half past 9, P.M. (6th Sept., Monday), and I have just come from the General's—the second time since 3 o'clock.

About 4 o'clock he announced to the generals of division and heads of staff corps that the negotiations for a peace had terminated and that nothing had been effected—the Mexican Government refusing to admit the ultimatum of our commissioner, Mr. Trist. He also informed us that he had sent a note to President Santa Anna to the effect that the Mexican Government having, in (specified) instances, violated the terms of the armistice, he, General Scott, was at liberty to consider it at an end without giving notice, but being willing, etc., he gave until 12 M. to-morrow for explanations, denials, or apologies, in the absence of which he should consider the armistice terminated from and after that hour.

“This evening the General called some of us together, including Capt. Robert E. Lee (engineer), to consider the best mode of threatening and attacking the city,—to determine the depot for the sick, wounded, supplies, etc. If the enemy does not assault us and force us on the defensive, we shall, in about three days, I think, have made a serious demonstration upon him. We have less than 8000 men: he has about 18,000 or perhaps 20,000—the remains of his army of 30,000. He is said to have seventy pieces of cannon; our General doubts it, but these Mexicans are always provident in artillery. We have captured upwards of six hundred (600) pieces of artillery since we landed at Vera Cruz.

“Mr. Trist said, this afternoon, that when he stated to the Mexican commissioners this afternoon the opinion of General Scott that the Mexican Government had violated the armistice, not one of them denied the fact. One of them said that if it was true General Scott's indignation was well grounded, and he assured Mr. Trist that they, the commissioners, had from the first urged upon the government the great importance and necessity of strictly adhering to its terms.

“7th Sept., A.M., and contrary to the expectation of some there was no firing upon us last night. We, at Tacubaya, are all under the guns of Chapultepec, nearly a mile distant. But the big guns will soon be heard. It is now two minutes of 12 noon, the time fixed by the General for terminating the armistice. I have just dismounted at my quarters (the house of a foreign consul) having been out riding with General

Scott, 'looking around.' I joined him at his quarters soon after breakfast when information came that the enemy was in motion in large bodies passing around Chapultepec, probably with an intention of striking this division on its left flank, while Chapultepec opens its batteries on our front.

"General Worth's division is here; General Pillow's division is at Misquaque (or some such-named place) 4 miles towards San Angel; General Twiggs's division is at San Angel, 6 miles from here; while General Quitman's division is at San Augustin, 12 or 13 miles off. The orders last evening were to remove the sick and wounded to Misquaki, but no order was given to move the divisions. This morning, when General Worth reported the movements of the enemy, he was disposed to put his division at once under arms, and order up the other divisions—but General Scott said: 'No. Let us look around first and see what the enemy is doing.' He then sent some officers out to look at the enemy and ordered his own horse saddled. We mounted and rode a few hundred yards, when he met a communication from General Santa Anna in answer to his note of last evening.

"The General returned to quarters and read the answer. In it Santa Anna denies the allegation that 'new' fortifications have been begun and says the work is only that of 'repairs.' (He says nothing of the parties working by night and not by day.) He charges upon General Scott a violation of the armistice in not allowing flour from certain mills to go into the city. The case is this: When we arrived here, and before the armistice was signed, the General took possession, as a lawful act of war, of all the grain in certain mills here at Tacubaya, and ordered the miller to grind it, paying, however, for the grain and for his services. The grain was still being ground when the armistice was signed, and the General did not think the signing it affected his arrangements.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII

BATTLE OF MOLINO DEL REY. BLOODY MISTAKE OF WORTH.  
NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER OF AMERICANS. ASSAULT ON CHA-  
PULTEPEC. CAPTURE OF THE CITADEL. FLIGHT OF  
ENEMY DOWN THE CAUSEWAYS. IN THE HALLS OF THE  
MONTEZUMAS

THE armistice was obviously at an end. All efforts to arrive at a permanent peace had failed. Recriminations on both sides produced increasing irritations. The war must go on. The capital could not be taken without another battle. This conclusion General Scott arrived at as he rode over the field across which the enemy had fled towards the capital, and he resolved to continue the contest by capturing an old vast building, a quarter of a mile long, which was called a mill and was alleged to conceal a foundry at the base of the hill and fortress of Chapultepec. The decision involved a badly directed and unfortunate battle which ought not to have been fought at all, and was thereafter to be known by the name of Molino del Rey, the King's Mill.

"After reading Santa Anna's answer and commenting orally upon it, the General rode up to the bishop's palace—one of the most elevated points about us, and, inspecting the position of the enemy and considering the information received last evening that some church bells had been taken down to make into cannon, he concluded that the movement of the enemy was not aggressive but defensive. The foundry is near Chapultepec, but farther from the city. The enemy's left appeared at the foundry and the General concluded that the movement had the double object of covering the foundry and also Chapultepec. Returning to his quarters it was reported to him that a force of some sort was moving out on the San Angel road. This he considered a mere party of observation. This was about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 A.M.

"3 P.M. At 1, I was at the General's. He read to me his order for massing the troops by to-morrow noon. Quitman and Twiggs are ordered to Misquique, but a brigade is this afternoon to threaten the city by the Piedad route (between San Antonio and the Chapultepec route), and to-night Worth, with his division and one brigade of Pillow's is to attack and destroy the foundry. Thus matters now stand. The foundry is under the guns of Chapultepec, and its destruction by daylight might be very difficult if not impossible without first silencing the commanding guns. Hence it is to be attempted to-night. So the orders contemplate.

"6 P.M. I am alone in the extensive garden attached to the house of the consul, in which I am quartered. I look upon the great variety of fruits and flowers in vast abundance and luxuriance, and I ask why the monster-genius of war is allowed to pollute such scenes.

"I have often entered my protest against this war, and to-day I hear, from very good authority, that our commissioner has said that if he were a Mexican he would die before he would agree to the terms proposed by the United States. He ought, then, to have refused the mission he has undertaken. A degrading proposition is alike dishonorable to him who proposes as to him to whom it is proposed.

"Wednesday, 8th Sept., 9 A.M. I have just returned from the field of battle. It has been a severe one. A very large part of the enemy's force was found in position to the west and north of Chapultepec. There is no estimating the extent of the force. Some of our people think there could not be less than 15,000 men, but this must be an exaggeration. Their line, entrenched or else covered with maguey (agave) or by buildings, including one hacienda, extended for about a mile. Our principal object of assault was a building supposed to be a foundry. Strange to say, our information turned out to be false. The building was captured, but no foundry was discovered. It seems it has been a foundry, but is no longer in use. We took the whole line of works from Chapultepec, but no attempt was made upon Chapultepec itself. We took several pieces of cannon, and several hundred prisoners, including prominent officers. . . . The fight began at daylight (about 5 o'clock), and terminated about 7 or half past."

The remainder of the diary record of this day consists chiefly of the names of friends who had been killed or mortally wounded, and a lamentation that the battle had been fought under a misapprehension of facts and disadvantageous conditions. The chronicler thinks that it was not only unskillfully directed but badly conceived and that it was "a sad mistake." "Captain Chapman came out in command of the 5th Infantry. He waved his hand towards the remains of his regiment and said, with tears in his eyes, 'There's the Fifth!' It did not extend much beyond the front of an ordinary company." As usual, the diarist tells us little of his own professional services to the troops, but as Inspector-General of the army he was constantly responsible for its efficiency in action. His bearing and activity in the field had already attracted such attention at Washington that he had been brevetted colonel on Aug. 20th, "for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco"; and in his official report of this battle of Molino del Rey, General Scott said, "I also had the valuable services, on the same field, of several officers of my staff: Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock, Acting Inspector-General," etc..

" $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 P.M. I lay down early, at 8, fatigued and somewhat weighed down with sorrow, and fell asleep, but have waked, supposing it near morning, but, lighting a candle, find it is not yet midnight. There is general grief in the army, both for the loss of so many valuable men and because of the manner of it. The enemy's extreme left rested on timber at the base of Chapultepec; passing towards the right there was a large mill, fortified; then on the right there was a fortified hacienda, the whole line extending a mile. Our prisoners say there were 8000 men on the line: we made the fight with 4000. But the attack on the hacienda is what is so grievous. The 5th and 6th Infantry were blindly ordered to charge it in the face of a most destructive fire, and when it was impossible to get into it without scaling ladders, or a breach, it was found that no ladders or battering guns had been provided for use on the instant; and while waiting a terrible loss of life was needlessly sustained. After this loss had occurred the battery was applied and the enemy fled. If it had been first applied, the enemy would have



been driven, and we need not have lost perhaps a dozen men at the hacienda. This is the statement of the surviving officers of the 5th Infantry. It is considered here that General Worth made the assault blindly. Although we have taken six pieces of artillery—all the enemy had on the field—and 48 officers and 632 men prisoners, still we regret the work of the day. On Aug. 20th, we were like Hannibal after the battle of Cannæ: we could have gone into the capital but did not (but I approve of this). On Sept. 8th, we were like Pyrrhus after the fight with Fabricius—a few more such victories and this army would be destroyed.

“9th Sept., A.M. I passed an uncomfortable night. Could not help regretting the events of yesterday. The whole expedition was committed to General Worth by General Scott. In the evening before the fight General W. sent a copy of his order of arrangement to General Scott. To this General Scott made, indeed, no objection, but General W. was not present to develop his idea and nothing was said of one point exceedingly ill-judged. As the object of the enterprise was the destruction of a certain building supposed to be a foundry, Gen. W. ordered an assaulting column of ‘veterans,’ as he called them (500 men), to be selected from the division. The effect was to separate officers from their men, to bring into the same conflict, side by side, men who did not know each other, and, above all, to separate men from their colors—a very serious matter, for every regiment has its own name and its own glory under its own flag. Now it is remarkable that this assaulting column of veterans was broken in its charge upon the enemy and about 150 men absolutely ran about 100 yards before they could be rallied. But the remnants of the same regiments charged the hacienda, equally well or better defended, without any break at all.

“Tacubaya, Sept. 10, A.M.  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6. A horrible scene is being enacted at San Angel about this present moment. We took about eighty prisoners at Churubusco who were deserters from our army; as many as seemed to have **an** excuse had their punishment commuted to fifty lashes; the remaining twenty are now being hanged.

“Yesterday the General with two aids and Captain Lee and myself went to the Piedad and passed around a circle

of several miles, returning by way of Miscoaque. The enemy is anticipating an attack from Piedad and we found immense activity among them in fortifying. They are certainly wonderfully active, and if their defence were equal to their preparation, they would do themselves credit. The General was, I thought, disappointed at finding such extensive works prepared and preparing, and would have struck a blow at once, but the several divisions of his army were not in position for it, and the sick, wounded, and supplies had to be secured. Reports give great numbers and enthusiasm to the Mexicans and the affair of day before yesterday will give them great encouragement.

“11 A.M. A slight drizzling rain. Our engineers have gone out: Lee with Colonel Harney to adopt the best mode of protecting our depot at Miscoac; Beauregard, Steevens, and Tower to look at the positions on the San Angel and Piedad road to the capital, on which the enemy is working with infinite zeal. Captain Hardee, 2d Dragoons, is ordered out around Chapultepec as if to find the route that way in the hope of diverting the enemy. On the whole, our affairs are just now as little promising as they have been at any time. I have had little hope of a peace, and have constantly had some lurking doubts of the English interest, supposed to be in our favor—not at all of the British Minister or his secretary, Mr. Thornton, but of the prime actor, Consul-General McIntosh. He and one of his English agents, Turnbull, have both married Mexican women, and we know that he has advanced Santa Anna money for the support of his army at the very time when he was holding out hopes of peace to detain us at Puebla. His object was to gain time for Santa Anna to raise, equip, and discipline his troops and provide himself with cannon. He, too, procured the armistice after the decisive battle of the 20th, at which time a single division of our army could have marched into the city with little or no loss.

“Near 2 P.M. I have been much with the General this morning, and am sorry to see that he is irritable—a sign that things do not go on to his mind. When prosperous, he is pleasant and good-humored, extremely kind and civil, but when his affairs seem unpromising he is rather harsh upon



those around him, especially his young *aides de camp*. He is then apt to be abrupt and cuts off persons in the midst of what they are saying—indeed, his uncomfortability diffuses itself all around him.

“Tacubaya, 11th Sept., A.M., finds us much as we were yesterday. Our engineers report the enemy strongly covered with artificial defences, and we hear that Alvarez with 4000 men is in our rear at San Augustin, where General Quitman was with his division two days ago. Our force, the General says, is 2000 less than when we left Puebla, including many fine officers, killed or wounded. We had from Puebla about 10,300 in all.

“10 A.M., and it is rumored that Valencia is to be to-day at Santa Fe (two leagues from here) with 3000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry from Toluca. But a few days ago we heard that his force did not exceed 400 men, and these had left him and joined Santa Anna. And, besides, it was said that Valencia was deranged and obliged to be confined—only outrageously mad with disappointment, I suppose.

“The preparations for defence on our right have become so formidable, considering the bad ground from which we must assault them, that the General has this morning almost concluded to strike at Chapultepec in earnest. I think he will do it. We are in a critical position. I cannot help recalling Kleber’s position in Egypt, and we may be obliged to attack Mexico as he attacked Cairo, and work in by inches.

“5 P.M., and many incidents have occurred. Can only chronologize the leading facts: there are now two principal points of attack before us—the *gareta* of San Antonio on the right and Chapultepec on the left. Supposing we meant to strike at the *gareta*, the enemy has been expending immense labor upon field-works commanding all the approaches. These are all cut by ditches in every direction for purposes of cultivation. The place is not only strong by recent works, but strong by nature.

“The General rode over to the vicinity of the *gareta* this morning and held a long council with the general officers, finally deciding, himself, to strike at Chapultepec to-morrow. Orders were given on the spot so far as preliminary movements are concerned.



“General Twiggs’s division is to appear before the *gareta* in order to keep the Mexican troops there, while heavy batteries are to be directed against Chapultepec, to be put into position to-night for that purpose. The other three divisions are to be used as circumstances require. The General said he would order up some of Twiggs’s division if an assault becomes necessary. This is a very important decision. If we carry Chapultepec, *well*; if we fail or suffer great loss, there is no telling the consequences. We have seen cannon firing this morning west of Tacubaya: the enemy’s cavalry was driven in. There was also apparently firing at our depot at Miscoac. I suppose the enemy knows of the General’s going over to the *gareta* and is trying to divert his attention.

“12th Sept., 5 A.M. I am at the General’s quarters expecting every moment to hear our guns directed upon Chapultepec. The General is yet asleep in the next room. I confess that I am not without anxiety about the result of the enterprise on foot. Both Major Smith and Captain Lee, though the latter favored the plan yesterday morning, expressed in the afternoon some doubt whether our guns could do more than demolish the upper part of the building within the main works at Chapultepec and thought an assault with scaling ladders would be necessary to reduce the place. We must see now, for the attack is to be made, come what may.

“11 P.M. We have had several heavy guns playing upon Chapultepec all day with but short intervals, and no impression seems to be made upon the main defences. Some shot holes appear in the mere building within the works, evidently of no importance to our object. There has been some musketry firing during the day with pickets and small parties, but, although the guns of Chapultepec were directed upon our three batteries, we have had only two or three men wounded from all causes, except that a reconnoitering party that had the temerity to go within 150 yards of the works had eight men wounded.

“This afternoon the General decided upon the necessity for an assault, and two assaulting columns, one from Worth’s division and one from Twiggs’s, have been detailed and are to be in position by daylight to-morrow morning—one to move under the direction of General Pillow and to be supported (?)

by his division of raw troops, the other to be directed by General Quitman and supported by his division of ditto. The assaulting columns are each about 250 strong, and are to be provided with ladders. General Pillow thought this morning that there were not more than 500 men in the works. I think at least 1500 men will be found there, and possibly many more. At the close of the talk this evening, after all was arranged, General Worth said to me, 'We shall be defeated'; and even General Scott, when all others had left the room, said to me, 'I have my misgivings.' General W. thinks an effort will be made to-night by the enemy to take or to spike our guns in battery. General S. thinks not.

"Tacubaya, Monday, Sept. 13, 10 P.M., and to-day we have taken Chapultepec, and entered the city of Mexico on two routes, our troops rushing over a multitude of batteries erected with infinite labor and even skill by the Mexicans.

"I had my misgivings last night—even the General had; but to-day the troops have outdone all former achievements—immeasurably so. I thought the fight of the 20th ult. unsurpassable, but to-day the troops have done more and in even finer style. The taking of Chapultepec, with its aged and dignified commander, General Bravo, is now, to my apprehension, *the* event of the war.

"Chapultepec is an isolated height of perhaps 200 feet, fortified with care at the crown or top with escarp walls over which our men had to climb with scaling ladders, after being obliged to pass woods, batteries, and breastworks filled with the enemy.

"General Scott was on the top of Count Alcordez's house in this town (Tacubaya) by about 7 A.M. Our batteries as directed opened their fire about 6 o'clock. He sent an order about 8 to 'cease firing,' which was the time fixed upon for the two storming parties to advance. He sent me with an order for the dragoons to pass around to the north of Chapultepec, and, as I reached the commander and gave him the order, the assaulting parties were in full view going up the rugged, stony hill—or, rather, one of them was visible going up from the west side—a sight never to be forgotten. I saw the colors advance,—saw the bearer shot down. They were instantly seized and raised aloft, but the party was apparently



checked. It was a moment of intense interest. The reason for the temporary halt, as appeared afterwards, was that the ladders had not kept up with the head of the party. As soon as they came up the walls were mounted, and in about three quarters of an hour, or an hour at the farthest, our troops were in possession of the entire works.

“From Chapultepec there are two aqueducts leading to the city. General Quitman went down by one and General Worth by the other—the latter upon the Cosmé road. The causeways by the sides of the aqueducts were defended by a succession of breastworks, which were stormed by the resistless ardor of our troops, one after another, until finally, at dusk, the two columns were both in the city, Worth advantageously, but Quitman under great disadvantage. Indeed, Quitman is in some jeopardy and has met with severe losses. Worth, ’t is said, has not lost over 15 or 17 men in the city. The loss at Chapultepec is universally spoken of as very small, but the exact number is not known. The troops have been more or less under fire the whole day, but everywhere the Mexicans have been driven, defeated, discomfited, and taken prisoners. We hold several general officers prisoners, as usual, a number of colonels, etc., etc. We have also taken 12 or 15 pieces of cannon.

“The General calls the fight of the 20th ultimo ‘the battle of Mexico.’ What will he call this of to-day? The fight of the 8th inst. has the name of the King’s Mill (Molino del Rey). The Mexicans thought that Chapultepec was our object that day, but it was not; and they rang the bells in the city for victory and no doubt thought that we could not take the place. To-day they have had a demonstration of skill, valor, perseverance, etc., on the part of our troops, which must affect them with astonishment. There is, however, yet much to do, and even now, late as it is, I hear every now and then the discharge of artillery in the city, which I suppose to be from the enemy’s guns upon Quitman. Worth has made his advance partially by cutting his way with pickaxes directly through buildings and by occupying the tops of houses with small howitzers by means of which he would drive the enemy from the tops of houses in advance of him.”



## CHAPTER XXXIX

FIRING IN STREETS AND HOUSES. THREAT TO DESTROY CITY  
FINALLY RESTORES ORDER. MEXICAN OFFICERS PAROLED.  
SCOTT URGED TO DECLARE HIMSELF DICTATOR. A DINNER.  
EULOGY OF WEST POINT

DURING the night following this exciting and eventful day General Scott and his staff slept or tried to sleep at Tacubaya, while the defeated and demoralized Mexicans were seeking refuge in the terrified capital and the victorious Americans were following close upon their heels. And in that rural retreat, as the noise of the tumult grew faint at midnight, the Inspector-General sat at his table and calmly wrote the important page of history which closes the last chapter.

“Mexico, Mexico, Sept. 14, 1847. Last night the Mexican army withdrew from the city. The City Council sent a deputation to General Scott, which reached him at Tacubaya about daylight this morning, asking him to grant certain terms or assurances to the city. He answered (I was present: he sent for me) that he would sign no paper on the subject until he should be in the capital, but he went on to give them (the three deputies) assurances of a disposition to protect all unoffending inhabitants, etc., etc. We took an early breakfast and, mounting our horses, rode to Chapultepec and along the causeway thence to the San Cosmé causeway, and so on into the city, and at

“9 A.M., rode into the court-yard of the palace. Dismounting and ascending the grand staircase, the General and his staff were in the only building that can be called the Halls of the Montezumas, being the national palace built by the Spaniards. The grand plaza is in front of me, the great cathedral on my right. My attention is called off by

the continual firing in different parts of the city—musketry and artillery.

“The Mexican soldiers have left the city, but the populace is attempting what has often been threatened. Before the General entered, and while General Worth was leading his troops towards the plaza, Colonel Garland was badly shot by a Mexican from a window. The house was instantly fired upon by our artillery and since then there is firing in the streets and houses all around us. Many Mexicans have been put to death and it is easy to see that a most serious state of things may result. Our people, however, have cleared the streets in sight from the palace, and, as the buildings in every direction are closed, the city reminds me of one described in the *Arabian Nights* which, in a single night, was statued, so to say—excepting, indeed, that our people under arms are seen and our guns disturb the silence.

“5 P.M. and I rejoice that night may bring some quiet. There has been a constant firing and whizzing of balls around us all day, and it is growing worse. I have been to the City Council and have threatened, in the name of the General and by his order, that he would destroy the city and give it up to pillage if the firing does not cease. I have earnestly recommended to the General the immediate concentration of our troops, and a positive order to cease firing except in the clearest case of self-defence. I saw an unarmed Mexican deliberately shot a few moments since, and I thought it horrible. I have since been told that the Mexican had soldier's pantaloons on, but I did not see them.

“15th Sept., A.M. (8), and there is but little firing this morning. It almost altogether ceased last night, when our soldiers were drawn together and kept in their quarters. The Mexicans are passing along the streets, but not many, and I found some market people in their places. I met one of the City Council, preceded by the bearer of a white flag; he had been out to order and beseech the people to keep quiet.

“I suppose also that the clergy have been at work, for I met one of them at the cathedral and directed him to tell the bishop that if the people did not cease firing the General would batter down the city and give it over to plunder, and



further, that the churches and church property would share the fate of the city. The scoundrel! I found him ensconced in a secure place, and when I began telling him that the clergy must exert themselves, he shrugged his shoulders and said something about his 'humility' and that he had no influence; but I waked him up when I talked of the destruction of the churches and property, and he promised to do all he could."<sup>1</sup>

"Mexico, Sept. 19, 1847,  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6 P.M., and I have taken a seat in my new quarters. The General was uncomfortable in the palace at Vera Cruz; uncomfortable in the governor's house at Jalapa, nor less so in the government house at Puebla; and he found himself very uncomfortable in the National Palace in this city. He has therefore moved again: himself yesterday and his staff to-day. I am with two other members of the staff at the house of a Spaniard, No. 10, Calle Something (Capuchinas.) It will do. The city is very quiet and if reports can be relied on Santa Anna has resigned the presidency and is making his way to the coast for the purpose of leaving the country. The Mexican army is said to be reduced to 4000 and these are at Toluca under General Herrera. Congress, 't is said, is to assemble at Querétaro in a few weeks.

"I had an interview with the head of the church this morning, and gave him some plain talk from the General for not opening the churches. He has promised to open them to-morrow morning at 6 o'clock. To-day is Sunday. The streets are filled with people, and, as confidence is being restored, many of the inhabitants who left the city are already returning.

"20th Sept. Monday, A.M., and at length the cathedral is open. I have been within it. There is a great deal of gaudy magnificence, but it looks old, like every other expensive work in this country. The Spaniards were certainly

<sup>1</sup> Col. Hitchcock was immensely active during the first days of occupation. He procured the issue of an order to close the drinking and gambling saloons and then enforced it himself; and years later, receiving from a surgeon a delinquent receipt for money turned in to him, he wrote on the receipt: "I remember breaking up a gambling-table established by a follower of the American army in the very palace in the city of Mexico on the 14th of September—the very day we entered. I overthrew the table with my own hands and dispersed the vagabonds about it, and then picked up some money, which I turned over to the sick and wounded."



a magnificent people and did everything on a grand scale. The Mexicans have done nothing but quarrel among themselves, and their quarrels have been contemptible. The firing in the city when we entered it, the 14th, was said by some to resemble that attending one of their revolutions; but our people in a single day killed more Mexicans in the streets than fell during an entire three weeks of one of their domestic wars. Perhaps it will keep the people still.

"Mexico, Sept., 24. The city continues quiet amid rumors of insurrection. Attacks on Puebla to be expected.

"Mexico, Sept. 26. Trouble about prisoners. We had 101 officers prisoners, held under the surveillance of a guard. Last night all escaped but about a dozen. Of our 3000 prisoners since the 20th of August, more than half have escaped. We have no adequate means of security, without treating them like convicts. . . . The centre of Mexican military activity is now said to be at Puebla, whence we have the most elaborate and contradictory rumors.

"Mexico, Sept. 30. . . . During the last three days I have been receiving the paroles of Mexican officers found in this city. A proclamation from the governor required all Mexican officers to report to my office, and I have a list of over 150. I confined two in close prison for refusing to give their paroles. One funny case occurred, where a nicely dressed and fashionable-looking man was reluctant to have it appear that he had surrendered himself in the city, but wished to have it recorded that he had been captured in battle, either at Churubusco or Chapultepec—no matter which. I was amused more than offended and finally told the man (he had the rank of colonel, with the brevet of general of brigade) that he might write his parole himself. He did so, representing that he had been taken prisoner at Chapultepec! Vanity of vanities! <sup>1</sup>

"Mexico, Oct. 2, 1847. An earthquake this morning—the first I was ever sensible of. I felt myself rolling on my bed, and, springing up and running to a front window, there, sure enough! every Mexican was on his knees on the sidewalk and street. There was a priest praying on his knees

<sup>1</sup> Among the papers left by General Hitchcock is a list of thirty-three generals paroled by him at this time.

in the middle of the street in front of my window. You contemptible rascal! thinks I; your superstition, so imposing upon common people, cannot protect you from the fear of a common danger. A few of our American soldiers were standing and looking upon the scene."

The diarist could still philosophize, but if he could ward off superstition there were other ills to which his citadel of life was pregnable. Although the city is 1200 feet higher than the top of Mount Washington it is in the bottom of a saucer-like valley which has never been drained. The large lakes within five miles are twenty feet higher than the city. Filthy water and sewage stand permanently within two feet of the surface of the streets. There are no cellars. The result is that the city of Mexico is the unhealthiest of cities. In the summer time fevers rage, and all diseases thrive that depend on impurity. Multitudes of our soldiers were there prostrated in 1847, and among the sick was Colonel Hitchcock. The announcement of his having been brevetted Colonel and Brigadier-General for gallantry at Contreras, Churubuso, and Chapultepec must have reached him before October, but he makes no mention of the compliment in his exhaustive diary. And now, in the autumn, having escaped the bullets of the enemy, he is taken dangerously sick and for a month makes no mark in his neglected book.

"Mexico, Nov. 1, 1847, 5 P.M. I sat up three quarters of an hour the day before yesterday, the first time in more than three weeks. Yesterday I sat up about an hour and a half. To-day I changed my quarters, riding four squares. I was taken sick at the Spaniard's house, from a low ceiling and damp walls. I have suffered greatly. I now have assigned to me the house of one of the Mexican generals. It is large and splendidly furnished—quite magnificent indeed.

"Mexico, Sunday, Nov. 14, 1 P.M., and I am somewhat better. It is now five weeks since I took to my bed. I am so very weak that it is with great difficulty that I go down stairs. . . . During my sickness I have had many interesting interviews with intelligent Mexicans on the political relations of this country and my own—with Gen. —, Dr. — and Sr. —, three distinguished members of Congress, now sitting at Querétaro, and the editor of a liberal paper here.



. . . I am on my guard, but men seem very fair. They are all of one party—the Puros, so-called—and do not hesitate to express a wish that the troops of the U. S. may hold this country till the Mexican army is annihilated, in order that a proper civil government may be securely established. They are opposed to payment of money by the United States to the government of Mexico, saying it would only corrupt those in power.”

General Scott, while in command in the city of Mexico, was urged to issue a pronunciamiento and declare himself dictator for six years; but he declined at once, one of the reasons he gave being that “it was required that he should pledge himself to slide the Republic of Mexico into the Republic of the United States, which he deemed a measure, if successful, fraught with extreme peril to the free institutions of his country.”

“Mexico, Nov. 26, 1847. Another proposition was discussed at great length this morning. Dr. ——— came to see me, saying he was going to Querétaro, and wished to ask the Mexican Government to apply for admission into the Union of the United States. Before doing so, he would like to know what answer the American officers thought the United States would make to such an application. . . . This is Friday; he is to call Sunday, when I am to tell him what some American officers of rank think about it. He wanted particularly the opinion of General Scott—but that I could not promise him.

“Nov. 30. I am to blame for not reporting more that I hear and see: about the Mexican Congress at Querétaro, and its deliberations—to give their wranglings such a name; the meeting of the governors of the Mexican states; the presence of the Mexican commissioners in this city waiting instructions; the recall of our commissioner; and a series of facts about the dissensions of our officers of rank. They seek to obtain distinction at home by writing puffing letters about themselves, which come back to us printed. They disgust the whole army and have resulted in the arrest of General Pillow, and, indeed, of General Worth, although the latter is not yet reduced to the low level of the former.

“Mexico, Dec. 6. All our regiments are very much



reduced—some to 130 to 150 men fit for duty. Recruits are arriving. They are very much needed. We had yesterday fewer than 6000 men for duty—perhaps not over 5000—to hold a city of 160,000 inhabitants, and a neighborhood of many thousand more. . . . Hays's rangers have come—their appearance never to be forgotten. Not in any sort of uniform, but well mounted and doubly well armed: each man has one or two Colt's revolvers besides ordinary pistols, a sword, and every man his rifle. All sorts of coats, blankets, and head-gear, but they are strong athletic fellows. The Mexicans are terribly afraid of them.

“Mexico, Dec. 10. . . . Day before yesterday General Scott gave a dinner, partly in honor of General Twiggs (to go to command at Vera Cruz) and General Pierce (to go home) and partly in honor of some new-comers. I wish to name all who were present, because of a remarkable compliment offered by General Scott to the U. S. Military Academy: General Scott was at the head of the table and Mr. Trist at the foot. On General Scott's right around to Mr. Trist guests sat in the following order: General Patterson, General Cadwalader, myself, Major Kirby (Paymaster), a baron (foreigner), Lieutenant-Colonel Withers, and General Pierce. On General Scott's left—General P. F. Smith, General Caleb Cushing, Colonel Wyncoop (Penn.Vols.), Colonel Bonham, Major Lally and General Twiggs—and then Mr. Trist.

“General Scott took occasion to make quite a long speech about the Military Academy, premising that there were only three graduates present, Mr. Trist, Colonel Withers, and myself. He apologized for speaking in our presence, but jocularly said we must hide our heads and consider ourselves under the table. At length he declared that but for the science of the Military Academy ‘this army, multiplied by four, could not have entered the capital of Mexico.’ Upon this text he dilated considerably, repeating it and desiring that all who heard him might remember his words, and he showed great evidence of earnestness. He spoke as if he were doing an act of justice to those who had been mainly instrumental in his own glorious successes. General Patterson echoed the opinion, and so, less warmly, did General Cushing. No others said anything aloud, but General Cadwalader whispered to

me his approval and concurrence. General Scott toasted the U. S. Military Academy. General Cushing toasted the General-in-Chief of the Army, who had, in the valley of Mexico, etc., etc. General Smith remembered those who, by their deaths, had given us the Mexican capital. The whole dinner went off well, and is to be remembered."<sup>1</sup>

"Mexico, Dec. 12. I have moved to another house--the fifth I have occupied since we entered the city. This is the great fête day of the Mexicans in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe. I visited the church of Guadalupe with General Scott yesterday. Great preparations were making for the celebration of to-day. . . . More troops have arrived from the U. S. We have now some 13,000 or 14,000.

"Dec. 29. I was in danger of being kidnapped or harmed to-day, having gone alone into a low dive in a bad quarter of the city to see what the noise was about. It seemed for a time as if I was in danger of being imprisoned, but I bought my captors off with an order for pulque all around."

<sup>1</sup> General Gaines, at 70 years of age, wrote (Dec. 9) from New York to Colonel Hitchcock: "Every man of military mind known to me here is amazed, as much as we are all rejoiced, at the apparently providential result of every conflict which our troops have had with the greatly superior numbers of Mexicans opposed to us, without the loss of a battle and with a constant succession of brilliant triumphs."

## CHAPTER XL

A CAMPAIGN OF SCANDAL. SCOTT VICTIM OF A POLITICAL INTRIGUE. DISREPUTABLE ATTACK. WORTH AND PILLOW CLAIM TO HAVE SAVED ARMY. A BANQUET AL FRESCO. A STRONG PEACE SENTIMENT. THE TREATY SECRETLY SIGNED

THUS the year 1847 had ended, with the city of Mexico and much of the country in possession of the army of the United States, and a promise of a treaty of peace soon to be solemnized. The air was still vocal with reports of a concentration of the hostile Mexican forces, and all sorts of preposterous rumors, while three or four men, each claiming to be President, were arrayed in arms against each other. And the American commanders to whom the triumph was due waited patiently in Mexico for the confirmation of the treaty and a summons to return home. They little suspected that an intrigue was already on foot in Washington having for its purpose the dishonoring of the chieftain who had captured the city of Mexico and dictated terms from the palace on the site of the Halls of Montezuma.

Whether this plot originated in Washington or not, it seems to have been wholly partisan. Scott was a Whig; he thought the war against Mexico wrong and had engaged in it reluctantly. It was therefore considered a case of poetical injustice that he was now found to be its chief hero, and it was resolved to ruin him if a libellous intrigue would do it. The administration found subservient instruments of its hostility in Worth and Pillow. These officers now circulated several slanders—among them the story that they had saved Scott's army from destruction by inducing him to take the "Chalco route," after he had resolved to sacrifice it by marching against the impregnable Piñon or by the impracticable



Mexicalcingo. Scott's defence from this curious and disreputable attack was conducted chiefly by Colonel Hitchcock, both in the newspapers of New York, St. Louis and Washington and before the military court to which the General-in-Chief was presently summoned. Even by November, 1847, this campaign of scandal had begun and it was continued through the coming year, resulting in the nomination by the Whigs of Taylor instead of Scott for the presidency. Until election returns were received it was assumed that Taylor had been fatally injured by having his army taken away from him, preventing his final victory.

"Mexico, Jan. 6, 1848. A brigade left this morning under command of General Cadwalader to occupy Toluca, the capital of the *state* of Mexico. There are rumors that Jeranta has collected 3000 men at a pass twelve miles this side of Toluca, to cut him off. Sounds like a Mexican story.

"8th Jan. General Scott told me yesterday (in confidence) that he would not be surprised if Mr. Trist should sign a treaty 'within 72 hours.' I asked what powers Mr. Trist had; the General answered that he had *none*, but assumed them.

"Mexico, Jan. 14. Our 'Spy Company,' commanded by 'Colonel' Dominguez, came up a few days since and reported that near Nopoluca they fell in with and captured a party of Mexicans, including three generals (Torrejhon, Mignon, and G——) and several other officers and forty men—a good service. Company came through from Vera Cruz in eleven days.

"Jan. 28. In addition to what the General told me on the 7th inst., he said ten days ago that the treaty would certainly be signed by last Saturday ('t is Friday to-day), and that he should forward it by special express to Washington. In this prospect, the Spy Company was sent down as far as Ojo del Agua, this side of Perote, to wait there for the special express. Yesterday I sent another member of the Spy Company to Ojo del Agua, to tell 'Colonel' Dominguez to remain there, for the treaty may not be signed till next week. Will it be signed at all? Mr. Trist is very positive that it will be.

"Jan. 30. Yesterday General Scott went out about fifteen miles by invitation from the City Council (Ayuntamiento), to

the ruins of a convent (Carmelite)—the most interesting ruin I have ever beheld. The City Council and some of their Mexican friends rode out mostly in carriages, while General Scott and staff, with General Butler, General P. F. Smith, and several other officers, rode on horseback. We went on the Toluca road, past Santa Fé, in all about twelve miles, and then turned short to the left into the mountains, and, after going some two or three miles more, rising all the while, we came in sight of the remains of the great convent. It was built in the 17th century, but has not been inhabited (unless by robbers) for nearly one hundred years. It is emphatically a ruin. The walls mostly remain standing, but the roof in many places is broken in, and numerous columns have been thrown down—probably by an earthquake. It was built of stone—much of it dressed. It is in a mountain gorge, almost entirely hid, and the ancient garden is overgrown with trees and bushes.

“But the circumstances of our visit to the ruin are as remarkable as the ruin itself. The General was *invited* by the City Council of this great capital of the country with which we are at war—with which we are *yet* at war!—and the Council took the most special care that a collation should be sent out from the city, embracing every delicacy which the country affords—a multitude of cooks, dishes, and every variety of wines and the greatest abundance of everything. They sent out even *chairs*, and had a long table spread under a canvas shelter sufficient for over fifty persons.

“The chief alcalde sat at the head of the table and another Mexican dignitary at the foot, and then we and the Mexican auxiliaries were distributed alternately on both sides of the table. General Scott was on the left of the alcalde and Gen. W. O. Butler on his right. The Council sent out a fine band (Mexican) and a special corps of musicians, to wit, three guitar-players and two flute-players. The band played on the arrival of the General and after dinner, while the other musicians, at a suitable distance, gave us music during dinner.

“The most remarkable incidents were of a political character. Several of the members of the Council, the alcalde included, gave toasts, all of which were decidedly friendly to the United States army, and in two or three instances



the speakers in so many words expressed the hope that we would not leave the country until we had first destroyed the influence of the clergy and the army!

“General Scott made remarks of a general nature, to the effect that he desired peace, etc., etc. The gentlemen became pretty well warmed, and after General Scott withdrew I told Major Palacios, a member of the Council, that, thanks to the courtesy of the City Council of the City of Mexico, we had seen something much more interesting than even the convent of San Bernard—the prospect of peace. This I made my ‘sentiment.’

“We started from the city at 8 A.M. and reached the convent at noon; left the convent at 2.30 and reached the city again before dusk. The General took an escort of two troops of dragoons, to guard against guerillas and robbers—also ordered a regiment to march out about five or six miles, which returned in the evening.

“Mexico, Feb. 1, 1848, 8 A.M. Freaner has just told me that the commissioners are to go to Guadalupe and sign the treaty at 2 o'clock. He is then to start with it express to Washington. By this treaty, as I understand from the General, the United States takes as a boundary the Rio Grande up to New Mexico, thence along the southern boundary of New Mexico to the River Gila, then the Gila to the Gulf of California, and some line to the Pacific a league south of the Bay of San Diego. The U. S. pays Mexico's debts to the people of the U. S. (the original claims of the U. S. against Mexico for alleged spoliations upon commerce) and *fifteen millions* besides. So, then, there is a prospect that the war will be brought to a close.

“8.30 P.M. I have seen the treaty with the signature of all the commissioners and the seal of each—the treaty, as usual, being written out in the languages of the respective countries. It was folded in the presence of Mr. Thornton, secretary of the English Embassy, Lieutenant Williams, A. D. C., and myself; also Mr. Freaner, who started with it as the bearer to Washington. Mr. Trist returned to Guadalupe at about 7 P.M., with the treaty signed.

“General Scott is out dining by invitation. He has written to our government for instructions, in case of the approval



of the treaty, as to the disposition to be made of public property—wagons, horses, etc., etc.—and has asked that some general officer be ordered to see to the final movement of the troops out of the country. It is probable now that the General may be returning to the U. S. in, say, fifty days, and I shall probably go with him.<sup>1</sup>

“3d. Feb., A.M., and the morning papers are silent about the treaty, the signing of which, like the entire management heretofore, has been conducted secretly.

“6th Feb. But they have not been silent since the 3d! The Mexican papers are positive that a treaty of *some* sort, the articles unknown, was absolutely signed by the commissioners on the 2d. They are right, and Americans here are beginning to believe the story. . . . I have not done my duty by this diary. I ought to have recorded a multitude of interesting incidents to enliven the narrative of events.

“To-day I heard a curious story: my native Spy Company of 100 men, commanded by the robber-chief Dominguez, is now absent on a trip to Vera Cruz, and Dominguez’s wife and others are sick here. I went this morning to see how they were getting on. It came on to rain and I was detained there and Madame told me of her experiences at Puebla after our troops had left there for this city. She was in great danger on account of her husband’s being in our service. She was secretly warned to escape, as a party of Mexicans who had already plundered her house was about to return to seize her. She disguised and disfigured herself and fled. She escaped recognition for some time, but was finally identified by a Mexican acquaintance, who demanded to know if it was true that Dominguez was with the Americans. ‘No,’ she replied; ‘he is sick, and not with the Americans.’ ‘Where is he?’ persisted the man. ‘Here, in the city, at a friend’s house,’ answered she. ‘Show me where he is,’ said he, ‘I will go with you. I must see him.’ ‘Come,’ said she at once,

<sup>1</sup> In his official report General Scott thus enumerated the men entitled to honorable mention after the storming of Chapultepec and the capture of the city of Mexico: “I beg to enumerate once more, with due commendation and thanks, the distinguished staff officers who, in our last operations in front of the enemy, accompanied me and communicated orders to every point and through every danger: Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock, Acting Inspector-General,” etc.

and led him to a house where a sick uncle was lodged. Leaving the Mexican in a front room she went into another, to tell her husband, as she said, where she told her uncle how matters were, and arranged with him to detain the man while she fled by a back door. He kept up a loud talk with an imaginary person, asking who wanted to see him while he was sick, why could n't he come later when he might be feeling better, etc., till she was quite out of reach. She hid herself again and followed our army to Mexico with her four young children and her sisters."

## CHAPTER XLI

COURT OF INQUIRY. VICTORIOUS WHIG GENERAL ARRAIGNED AS CRIMINAL IN CITY HE HAD CAPTURED. CHARGES PREFERRED BY SUBORDINATES. UNHEARD-OF PROCEEDING. PRESIDENT POLK SUSPENDS SCOTT FROM COMMAND. PILLOW'S "LEONIDAS" LETTER. WORTH THREATENS HITCHCOCK WITH ARREST. DIARY PRODUCED IN COURT

AS has been seen, the unbroken series of victories by the American army did not result in general harmony. Indeed, every additional success seemed to be followed by increased discord and quarrelling. Instead of concluding, as Winfield Scott Schley concluded after his destruction of the Spanish fleet off Santiago, that there was "glory enough for all," some officers sought to augment their own reputations by belittling the work of others. At least three "Presidents" of Mexico were in arms against each other in front of the American army, and some of the American officers caught the contagion of jealousy and strife. Pillow, a brave and competent but vain commander and a pet of President Polk and Secretary Marcy, wrote or caused to be written to home newspapers extravagant accounts of his own personal prowess. These letters, disparaging his equals and superiors, were received in the army with much condemnation and ridicule. General Scott laid charges of insubordination against General Pillow and demanded his trial, including General Worth and Colonel Duncan in the arraignment. The Secretary of War replied that **their** trial would be ordered, but that as General Pillow had, **some** weeks earlier, written to the War Department a letter disrespectful to the Commander-in-Chief, that letter would be regarded as charges and specifications and General Scott would have to be tried first! So, virtually, the



great chieftain who had marched his small army across Mexico and into the halls of the Montezumas—incidentally adding California and several other States to the American Union—was now, like Columbus after he had discovered America,—to be put on trial as an offender! The wonder is that he was not, like Columbus, sent home in chains.

“Mexico, Feb. 8th. Surprising news came yesterday: the President of the United States has ordered a court of inquiry to convene at Puebla on the 18th to investigate the basis of charges brought by General Scott against General Pillow and brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, and into the appeal of General Worth against an order issued by General Scott in which General Worth felt himself censured. General Twiggs, who commands at Vera Cruz, sent the order up by a merchant’s express. We expected an order for a court-martial, not a court of inquiry, or else that the President would order the officers to the States for trial.

“Mexico, Feb. 18, 1848. The treaty was sent off on the night of the 2d inst. and the General told me this morning that General Mora (Vilamil) called on him in the character of a commissioner to treat for an armistice. The treaty itself was signed on the part of the United States by Mr. Trist (though his powers as a commissioner had been absolutely revoked), but the armistice must be made by the General.

“The General told me he felt embarrassed by several facts: that Mr. Trist had been recalled; that intimations have been thrown out of his own (Scott’s) recall; that this recall may come in the next mail, expected in three or four days; that, if he is to be relieved, he wishes his successor to decide upon the terms of the armistice. At the same time, he says, he will get all ready to act when the mail arrives,<sup>1</sup> and, if not relieved, he will appoint Generals Butler and Smith Commissioners to require, as a condition of a cessation of hostilities, that the Mexican Government shall assume the payment of \$200,000 a month, to be deducted from the amount to be paid by the United States (in the treaty) in place of the

<sup>1</sup> On Jan. 13, 1848, Secretary of War Marcy wrote to General Scott, “The President has determined to relieve you from further duty as commanding General in Mexico,” and ordered him to appear before the court of inquiry.

contribution he has ordered levied upon the Mexican states in our occupancy. He will stipulate, also, that if the treaty be not ratified by the United States, the armistice ends; and it may be ended suddenly should the Mexican Congress delay its acceptance unreasonably.

“3 P.M. NEWS! A special messenger has arrived—23 days from Washington—and has brought orders from President Polk relieving Major-General Winfield Scott from the command of the army in Mexico! It devolves, therefore, upon Major-General Butler,<sup>1</sup> the next in rank. The orders are dated Jan. 13, and General Scott is advised by a letter of the same date that a court of inquiry has been ordered by the President to examine into sundry matters (here noted on the 8th.) The President has ordered Generals Pillow and Worth and Colonel Duncan released from arrest, while General Scott is directed to attend the court of inquiry until informed that his presence is no longer required, when he is to report in person to the War Department at Washington.<sup>2</sup>

“In June last General Scott, in a letter to the War Department, after reciting or alluding to the ‘many outrages’ inflicted on him by the government at home, requested that he might be relieved by November, when he *supposed* active military operations in this country would cease. They ceased, in fact, on the entrance of this army into this city, 14th of September.

“Mexico, 19th Feb. The dinner to which we sat down at 6 P.M. was in the highest degree *recherché*. It was given by Mr. Drusini in honor of General Scott. Mr. Trist, Gen. P. F. Smith, and Capt. Robert E. Lee were present, besides myself of our army. There were about an equal number of Englishmen, including Mr. Doyle, the English Minister or *chargé*, I don’t know which, Mr. Thornton, secretary of legation, Mr. Davidson, a millionaire, and agent of the Rothschilds, Dr. Martinez, an eminent physician, and Mr. ——— whose

<sup>1</sup> William Orlando Butler, of Kentucky, after practicing law for thirty years was nominated Major-General when the Mexican War began. He was nominated for Vice-President, on the ticket with Cass, three months after assuming command in Mexico.

<sup>2</sup> After being ordered before the Military Court General Scott wrote to the Secretary of War: “Perhaps, after trial, I may be permitted to return to the United States. My poor services with this most gallant army are at length to be requited as I have long been led to expect they would be.”



name I did not distinctly hear. Mr. Drusini is a wealthy English merchant, about 45 or 50 years of age, medium stature, fair complexion, mild, amiable aspect, and deportment in keeping. His house is richly furnished and his silver plate immensely valuable.

“The dinner went off in the English fashion. Nobody asked for anything, and nobody was offered anything except by the servants, who carried around numberless dishes in succession and each took what he chose. Now and then the host would quietly ask some one—by turns, all,—to take wine, but *very* quietly. The conversation was easy, with a tendency to cheerfulness. Mr. Doyle was quite lively with his story-telling. We separated at 9.30, after coffee in the parlor. I had some conversation after dinner with Mr. Thornton and Mr. Doyle. They both deplored the order relieving General Scott and said it would be bitterly condemned in Europe, as the result of low and vulgar intrigue by inferior men.

“Sunday, 20th Feb. So far as I can discover, there is in the army a feeling of unmitigated condemnation of the late change, universal except among the immediate partisans of Pillow, etc. We all see the enormity of the conduct of the President—deplore and abhor it.

“My relative position is not changed. As Acting Inspector-General I report to General Butler. General Scott told me it had been his intention to take me with him to the United States, but, as he is to remain here in attendance upon the court of inquiry, he thought it would be better for me to join General Butler, if General B. should desire it. General S. saw General B. and then told me that General B. expected me to go on duty as Inspector-General. I can go in command of my regiment, I suppose, but I should then be no less under the command of the new General, and should, in addition, be exposed to being under the orders of other new generals commanding the brigade or division to which my regiment may be attached.

“Originally my great hope in joining General Scott’s staff was to escape the orders of mushroom generals,—political appointments usually—men who know nothing of the science or art of war, and who, in fact, are indebted for all the reputation they ever acquire to the science in the main body of



the old regular army, which many of them pretend to despise. Without the discipline, organization, and tactics of the old army, the new army, generals and all, would be but a loose mob. General Scott never said anything truer than when he remarked, in presence of several new generals, that 'this army four times multiplied' would never have forced its way into Mexico, but for the science and skill from the Military Academy at West Point. (Noted by me on Dec. 10.)

"Mexico, March 2. Gen. Joseph Lane<sup>1</sup> returned yesterday from an expedition with about 300 men in search of the robber-chief Jaranta. He was found with 400 or 500 men in a small village among the mountains about 120 miles from here, where, thinking himself quite safe, he was surprised and, as General Lane reports, had over 100 men killed and forty odd taken prisoners, while Lane lost one horse and had three men wounded. The Texas volunteers under Hays and armed with Colt's six-shooters made a part of this command.

"March 4, 1848. It is understood that the armistice left here this morning for Washington. It will of course be published here immediately and take effect at once.

"Mexico, March 14. The court of inquiry met in the palace yesterday—adjourned over till to-morrow.

"15th March. Court met to-day, but did no business. General Worth yesterday addressed a note to the court stating that the President of the United States had done him 'ample justice' and that, 'in view of the interests and harmony of the service,' he requested permission to withdraw his complaint against General Scott. The note was handed to General Scott this morning in the court-room. He made a few remarks, asking that haste be made. Time was of great importance to him, and he was reluctant to lose 'a day—an hour.' I remarked to Captain Huger as we came away arm in arm that the affair assumed a most extraordinary aspect; that General Scott was arraigned as a *criminal* before a petty tribunal in the very capital of the enemy's country; that he was arraigned on charges preferred by his juniors against whom he had himself preferred charges; that General Scott had conquered and captured the very place where the court sat; that the officers who had by him been arrested had all been

<sup>1</sup> Lane was called the "Marion of the Mexican War."

released from arrest, while he, Gen. Scott, has been suspended from command. Surely, this is strange!!!

"March 20. The proceedings of the court of inquiry have taken an unexpected turn. The two cases of Duncan and Worth are laid over until the orders of the President can be received, but the case of Pillow is taken up on General Scott's saying that he was ready.

"March 22. The court yesterday received the testimony of Mr. Freaner, the correspondent of the New Orleans *Delta*. The 'Leonidas' letter, published in the *Delta* last September, full of falsehoods and puffs of Pillow, General Pillow repeatedly denied in print all knowledge of, and complained that it was ungenerous and unjust to impute it to him. Now Mr. Freaner presents in court the interlined MS. letter, which is in all material respects the same as the 'Leonidas' letter. General Pillow admitted that he had caused it to be prepared for the correspondent of the *Delta* and had made certain interlineations himself, which he designated and pointed out to the court. Mr. Freaner testified that General Pillow handed it to him and requested him to embody it in his report of the battle. Now, in making absolute denials of all knowledge of the 'Leonidas' letter, even addressing notes to both the editors of papers in this city, affirming that he knew nothing of it, General Pillow has—well, let it pass. I am told that Mr. Trist's testimony was terribly severe on General Pillow.

"26th. Sunday. Yesterday was a feast day, in honor of some saint, no better, perhaps, than one described by Boccaccio.

"Mexico, Mch. 27. Among my duties is that of deciding applications from proprietors of buildings and directors of institutions, to be exempt from furnishing quarters to troops. It is the General's wish to quarter the troops with the least possible inconvenience to the inhabitants, and altogether avoid interfering with educational establishments. We follow the example of the Mexican generals in occupying convents of monks, San Francisco, San Domingo, San Bernardo, San Augustin,—all these are immense establishments, the first and last especially.

"Mexico, April 2, A.M. Last night about 12 o'clock Dr. Tripler came into my room with the news that the treaty,



modified in two or three articles, had been ratified by our Senate.

"About the 23d of January I wrote a long letter to Prof. Charles Davies, in New York, giving him a good deal of information on points that had been misrepresented by letter writers. I bore down very hard on both Generals Worth and Pillow. It came back here printed (without my name) some three days ago and made a sensation. Yesterday General Scott called me as a witness in the Pillow case, and Pillow produced the *Courier and Inquirer* of March 12th and asked me in court as to its authorship. I acknowledged it, but gave reasons for having written it quite as unpalatable as the letter. General Worth is in a fury about it. I have told the truth, and I stated to the court that I felt called upon, having a knowledge of the facts, to communicate them, as an effort to rebut the errors, not to say falsehoods, published by four letters in particular—among which I named the 'Leonidas' letter. It will make a great noise.

"Apr. 4. Yesterday I underwent a long cross-examination by Pillow. He used every effort to irritate me, but in vain. I was perfectly at home and answered all his questions. I had a chance to explain why I wrote the letter to Davies and that I wrote it with the freedom of epistolary correspondence, not expecting that the letter would be printed entire, but intending to put the facts in his hands to be used at his discretion. I stated that I thought it a duty to the army, to our country and to history that those of us who knew the truth should tell it and put down the vile falsehoods which have been spread before the public. I claimed that I had violated no regulation; that I felt perfectly free to use my knowledge of the campaign (which, I said, was 'considerable'), and that I expected to continue to use it as occasion might require. I was on oath, and took care to remind the court that I was aware of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of this military court sitting first in Mexico and then in Frederick, Md., were printed in full by the government in an octavo volume of about a thousand pages. The testimony of General Hitchcock fills some twenty pages. In this official report, the testimony above referred to (Pillow's cross-questioning) read thus: "In reply to the question I state that I do not consider it an official duty and I am under no private engagement to write accounts of the operations of the American army in this



"8th Apr. I yesterday wrote a letter to Prof. Davies to be by him published with my name, sending a copy of my note to General Pillow dated Nov. 24th, last. Mr. Trist left here to-day, superseded by Colonel Sevier of Arkansas, as minister.

"Mexico, 13th Apr. Last evening Captain Scott told me that General Worth had some days ago asked for my arrest for writing the 'scandalous' letter (of the 23d of Jan.), but that General Butler had told him that before doing anything in the matter he would prefer to see specific charges. Whether charges will be presented remains to be seen. I remarked that he might put me to some inconvenience but that I would lay a load upon his shoulders that it would require a strong man to bear. Scott said that Worth knew *that*, and so he doubted whether charges would be brought. I then told him what had been communicated to me by Gen. P. F. Smith. Smith was operating in Monterey and Worth sent Pemberton with authority to retire him. Smith sent back word that he was 'doing very well and would continue.' Worth then sent Colonel Peyton with a suggestion as to whether he had not better retire. Smith was irritated and retorted, 'I have made such arrangements that all Hell can't get me away!' Thus he stayed and saved Worth's reputation.

"Mexico, 14th Apr. Last evening General Scott sent for General Smith and myself and shew us in presence of his aids a letter from the War Department of the 14th (March) acknowledging receipt of one from the General of the 28th of Jan. on the subject of the so-called council in July last (the 16th—I made a note of it July 18), in which the General informed sundry officers that he had on the application of Mr. Trist, commissioner, placed a million of money at his disposal to secure a treaty. Some (false) account of the Council found its way into print and the Chief Executive called upon General Scott for the facts. The General answered

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valley, or during the late campaign. But I do consider it a public duty to do all I can to prevent the misrepresentation of facts and to contribute to the means which may be necessary to enable the proper historian yet to be to fulfil his duty to the world in a truthful manner. I consider myself in possession of considerable information about this campaign, and I feel entirely at liberty to publish it and expect to exercise that liberty."

—by letter of 28th of January. The War Department now writes that the answer is not full or satisfactory and has directed the subject to be inquired into by the court of inquiry now in session here. The court is ordered to sit with closed doors.

“The General says that the matter is one which by him can be explained only to the President of the United States, as it involves the conduct of certain foreign representatives to this country (referring to the British legation) and he is bound in honor to say nothing of it ‘except to the President and *perhaps* the Secy. of War.’ He therefore designs declining (refusing) to appear before the court in this matter.

“Sunday, Apr. 16. Mr. (“Col.”?) Sevier has arrived. The new President of Mexico, Pena y Pena, expects the ratification of the treaty as soon as a quorum can be got in his Congress.

“After 4 P.M. Have been to church and seen the ceremonies of Palm Sunday. Very imposing. Hundreds of wax-lights. An exhibition of the crucifixion—Christ between two thieves all as large as life and suspended on crosses. Beautiful music which quite entranced me till, feeling in my pocket, I found that some *religieuse* had contrived to steal my handkerchief from the bottom of my coat skirt. This is the fourth success out of seven attempts.”

From the loss of the useful personal property amid such solemn surroundings, the diarist by easy transition returns to metaphysics and, for the first time since landing at Vera Cruz, records his more mature meditations on Spinoza’s *Ethics* and the *Institutes of Menu*. He has not yet recovered his library, and he has small access to books, but, during the leisure afforded by these vacant weeks of sluggish court sessions and slow preparation for departure, he shows a strong tendency to resume his philosophical contemplations and arguments concerning the Absolute. But he still manifests all needful ability to protect his personal rights:

“21st Apr. An attempt was made some days ago by General Pillow to discredit my testimony in regard to the hour of General Scott’s arrival upon the field of battle on the 19th of August—‘3 P.M. exactly.’ Yesterday General Scott called me again before the court and asked if I made a memoran-



dum of the hour, and if so to produce it, etc. I produced my note-book and explained the time when I made a note of the hour. I handed the book to the president of the court, who, very delicately and merely as a form, looked at the entry as I pointed it out. General Towson then handed it to General Cushing, who looked at it in the same way, and General T. then passed it towards Colonel Belknap, who waved his hand as if he were satisfied and did not wish to look at it. I had said, when I handed the book to the president, that the record was purely personal and private and never was intended for public exhibition, and was produced now only from seeming necessity. General T. rather urged Belknap to look at the entry, and he glanced at it and then passed the book to the judge-advocate, who made the necessary extracts and then returned the book to me.

“General Pillow then asked for the book. I asked the court if the book was subject to be examined by General Pillow. The court, whispering together, evidently wished, out of delicacy, that Pillow should desist from his purpose; but he claimed that he had a right to satisfy himself as to the authenticity of the note. I then said, in a loud and clear voice, ‘If General Pillow has any doubts about the genuineness of the entry I wish him to satisfy himself, but I do not wish to indulge mere curiosity in looking over my private note-books.’ I handed the book to him, and the unblushing scoundrel turned and read page after page in different parts of the book, until my patience became exhausted.

“I then remarked, in an equally clear voice, ‘If General Pillow has sufficiently gratified his curiosity, I expect him to return my note-book.’

“‘Don’t be alarmed!’ said he; ‘I shall return it in due time!’

“General Scott saw that I was filled with indignation and said, ‘The witness had better not speak.’ I saw that he mistrusted my prudence, for the provocation was very great. He then raised the point of order as to whether General Pillow had a right to inspect the book beyond the mere note I had submitted. The president remarked that the court had satisfied itself as to the character of the book and had done with it, and that its being in the hands of General Pillow was a matter between myself and him.



"Everybody was thoroughly disgusted with the ——, and he finally handed back the book to me. During that time I had answered two, if not three, questions put to me by General Scott and the answers were recorded. I have noted all this because it is characteristic of the delicacy and decency of General Pillow.

"We are in the midst of the grand feast days of the church—Christ's death and resurrection. Churches highly and gaudily decorated and brilliantly lighted. No bells rung, but the people, old and young—many too old for such nonsense—carry about a noisy rattle like what, as a boy, I used to call a 'horse fiddle.' Watchmen use them in New York to give alarms. Those used here are of all sizes and shapes. What is a nation of such children worth?

"21st Apr., 8 P.M. The court of inquiry adjourned to-day to reconvene in Frederick, Md. I have just seen the General for a moment, full of preparations for leaving here for the States. He told me to call in an hour and a half, when he might have something to say. When I called he asked me to call at 7.30 in the morning. He is to start at 8 and forbids all persons calling to take leave and commands General Butler to pay him no parting honors. He has sent word along the line that he will receive no honors on his way to Vera Cruz—on the ground that he is under condemnation of the government. He will sail direct from Vera Cruz for New York; and on arriving home will refuse all honors. All papers lately received are full of indignation against the government. They are bitter against Worth and Pillow—terribly so.

"Mexico, Apr. 23, Sunday, A.M. General Scott left here in a carriage drawn by mules about 9 A.M. yesterday. From the time the court adjourned day before yesterday he set himself at work to leave as soon as possible. He cut off the visits of all who would have been most happy to testify their high opinion of him. The Aztec Club, composed of American officers, sent a request that he would receive them. He declined. . . . The day passed heavily with me—alone. . . . General Scott gave the key of his wine closet to me with directions to distribute the contents to Dr. Seeger, Capt. Robert E. Lee, and other of his friends at discretion. I shall consult Lee about it."

## CHAPTER XLII

HITCHCOCK REVISITS BATTLE-FIELDS. BEGINS TO WRITE HISTORY OF THE WAR. MORE SCANDALS IN ARMY. GENERAL BUTLER IN COMMAND. HOMEWARD BOUND

THE occupation of Mexico by the victorious army of the United States was obviously drawing to a close, in a manner scarcely creditable to the great republic of the north which sent it forth. These monotonous weeks of spring in Mexico were employed by General Hitchcock in a resumption of the study of Spanish under direction of a pretty señorita in the city; in reading such books as he could lay hand on and commenting to himself on their contents; in giving welcome to distinguished American visitors in Mexico for the first time; in recording the confession and question: "I am perhaps the only man who has dared to speak the truth of our officers. Why must every general be praised as a hero, greater than Napoleon?" He revisits Contreras, Churubusco, Chapultepec, and other nearby battle-grounds and his former places of tranquil sojourn. He discusses the "new French Revolution" and ventures on an estimate of its outcome.

During May three American officers are tried by military commission for the robbery of a Mexican bank and the murder of one of its inmates, and they are all sentenced by the court to be hanged. General Hitchcock is terribly scandalized and shocked to find that they are not only respected lieutenants, but that one of them belongs to the regular army and is a graduate of West Point! "This," he says, "is a very astonishing and awful business." General Butler reprieves the sentences and permits all three to resign and go home! The faithful diarist records their names; but as they are assumed to have lived reputable lives after their return, and as one of



them attained a prominent position as a civil engineer, the identification at this time is unnecessary. News came from Querétaro that the House had accepted the treaty and that the Senate would at once ratify it. "I am on a board of officers to decide how much ordnance, ammunition, etc., shall be restored to the Mexicans under the treaty."

"Mexico, 27th May, 7 P.M. I am preparing to leave this city for home day after to-morrow. General Butler seems satisfied of the passage of the treaty through the Mexican Senate day before yesterday. I am to go to New Orleans and prepare for the discharge of the volunteers.

"Orizaba, Mexico, June 5, 1848. Left Mexico last Monday at 3 P.M., and got here this (Monday) morning at 10.30, under the escort of the Spy Company. The war is considered over. Two days ago we heard that Chairó, a celebrated guerilla or robber, was on the road, and were not relieved of apprehension of attack till we descended into the valley yesterday and saw that all difficult passes had been placed in our rear. . . . Nothing can exceed the beauty and magnificence of much of the scenery from Puebla to this city. We are now in the warm region and are to halt here for rest and repairs. . . . The Spy Company I am to discharge, with their own consent, by paying them \$20 per man at Vera Cruz—except the chief, Dominguez, who will go to New Orleans. He says he would be 'killed like a dog' if he remained here. The remainder of the company expect to go to Campeachy on an expedition proposed by General Lane 'on his own hook.'

"Vera Cruz, June 15. After leaving Orizaba we had an extraordinary scene in the Spy Company, between Dominguez, the chief, and Spooner, the interpreter, between whom there was an old feud. Dominguez was angry at the manner in which a servant drove the mule carrying one of his packs, and chastised him. Spooner imprudently interfered. 'What business is it of yours?' asked Dominguez. More words passed. Suddenly they drew swords. Spooner fired his pistol directly at Dominguez and missed his mark, whereupon Dominguez laid his sword upon Spooner. Spooner turned his horse and rode away at full speed, Dominguez riding after him. I intercepted the latter where his horse stumbled,



put my hand sternly on his shoulders and exclaimed 'Amigo!' He responded amicably, and promised not to do anything to Spooner till we reached Vera Cruz. I then sent Spooner on a forced march ahead of us, and so separated them.

"New Orleans, June 23, 1848. Arrived (at anchor in the river) last night a little after midnight. Busy with the details of landing the troops on board (*Michigan*) it was after 2 P.M. to-day before I was able to occupy a room at the Veranda, where I am quartered. Have already met many old friends.

"A fair run here, and I am now in the Estados Unidos once more. My heart swells at the thought. I am returning from a perfectly successful campaign which has been full of interest from every point of view. I have been the Inspector-General of a noble army—the finest and largest that our country ever had,—and it has accomplished almost miracles.

"24th June. Dined with General and Mrs. Gaines.

"25th June. The *Delta* handsomely notices my arrival yesterday and, supposing me already a full Colonel, hails me as prospectively a brevet Brigadier. With General Pillow on my back and him the confidential friend of the President, I shall be lucky to escape with my commission sound. No matter; besides some strength in my own rectitude I feel great confidence in the support of all proper-minded men, and I happen to know something of the philosophy of both Spinoza and Swedenborg. The latter's work on the *Infinite* is now on the table before me. I found it at a book store yesterday. It is wonderful how little his open followers know of Emanuel Swedenborg—a mere refiner upon Spinoza, or a sort of dreamer upon the principles of the Jew.

"June 30 finds me still in New Orleans. General Taylor and (brevet) Lieutenant-Colonel Bliss arrived this morning from Baton Rouge. General Butler is here; General Twiggs arrived from Mobile; General Patterson came from Vera Cruz yesterday—all at the St. Charles. City flooded with every grade of officers."

While tarrying in New Orleans General Hitchcock was vigorously besieged by the participants in the Mexican War, who united in entreating him to write a history of that contest. They knew that he had disapproved of the motives of the administration which began it and yet had been actively

present in the battles which effected the conquest of the invaded country—and therefore that he would be likely to be impartial. They knew that he had occupied a confidential position at the head-quarters of the American commander, and therefore had unparalleled opportunities. They knew, from the exhibition of his diaries at the trial of General Pillow, that he kept a minute record of occurrences daily and almost hourly, and therefore would be likely to be exact. General Hitchcock took these urgent requests into favorable consideration and, at last, began a history of the Mexican War, as follows:

“Milton, Johannes, said he was ambitious of producing something which the world would not willingly let die.

“The writer of the following sketch or sketches of the campaign of General Scott in Mexico does not emulate the ambition of the author of *Paradise Lost*: he does not aim to produce what the world will not let die unwillingly; he does not aim, properly speaking, to *produce* anything; but as something has been done by the American armies in Mexico of which he has some personal knowledge, he feels called upon to publish what he knows. If what he publishes survives the present age it will owe its preservation to the extraordinary character of the campaign and not to its own merits as a composition. The author is a soldier and not a writer. He states this simply as a fact, and not to guard against or deprecate criticism. Those who read for information will duly consider the disadvantages under which an unpractised writer must labor.

“But the author confesses he writes more for a succeeding age than the present; and he feels safe in thus indicating his purpose, for, if the work does not pass beyond the present time, it will not live to accuse his memory of presumption. The writer is accustomed to look into past times signalized by important events and to reflect upon the great value of contemporary accounts of those events, particularly when they proceed from actors; and he thinks an additional value attaches to such accounts when they come from actors who, while in a position to know the truth, were not in a position to write under a bias as seeking their own fame. The writer considers himself in an especial manner as falling within this description of actors in the campaign of General Scott, and in order to make this appear he proposes at once to indicate that position and to show, that while he occupied a place sufficiently elevated and confidential to know much of what transpired in the campaign, he was not in a position to claim any of its honors,

while the circumstances will show that he was sufficiently independent and may claim to be impartial."

Thus far the most vigilant and trustworthy observer of the Mexican campaigns had written when he came to a full stop. He intimates that it will be necessary to speak in the first person instead of the third, but, for reasons known only to himself, he never resumes the important narrative. But he kept trunkfuls of his diaries with the greatest care.



## CHAPTER XLIII

DOMINGUEZ IN NEW ORLEANS. STORY OF THE SPY COMPANY.  
ITS FORMATION AND SERVICES. PROMISED PROTECTION  
AND PARDON. HITCHCOCK APPEALS TO JEFFERSON DAVIS.  
RELIEF WITHHELD. AN UNGRATEFUL NATION

THE robber-chief Manuel Dominguez, commander of the Spy Company, had come with his family to New Orleans with General Hitchcock, a fugitive from his own country, where his treason in behalf of the Americans had imperiled his life. General Hitchcock was honorably anxious about his safety, for he had been made by General Scott the intermediary for securing and retaining the remarkable and faithful services of the Spy Company. Before coming to Vera Cruz, therefore, constantly reminded of the obligation by the presence of the man and his comrades and his interesting and defenceless family, he wrote over his favorite *nom de plume* "Veritas" the following romantic story of Dominguez and his men. It was printed in the *New York Courier and Inquirer* while the writer was in Vera Cruz waiting for transportation.

"To understand the character of Manuel Dominguez, the chief of the native Spy Company in the service of the United States, it is necessary to remark that our people, living under an equal and just administration of wise laws, are not well prepared to judge of such men. They need to be told that wise laws are for the most part unknown in Mexico, and it is still more rare that anything like justice or equity finds its way into their administration. The consequence is that here, as in other badly governed countries,

individuals are forced into employments and positions hostile to the society which not only gives them no protection, but often subjects them to the severest injuries, aggravated by every species of insult and outrage. That Dominguez is no common man any judge of human nature may see by a single glance at his dark and penetrating eye, especially when lighted up by any feeling whatever. That like Lambro he has been 'stung from a slave to an enslaver' is almost literally true. He was originally an honest weaver, and there is no reason to doubt that, had he been protected in his honest avocation, he would have remained an honest and useful member of society. By thrift and theft he improved his fortunes and became a sort of merchant in a small way, accumulating by industry *ribosas* and similar fabrics to the extent of many mule-loads. His habitual residence was at Puebla, from which place he traded both to the city of Mexico and Vera Cruz.

"To be brief, Dominguez, on one of these commercial adventures, in which he had embarked his all, and upon which he depended for the support of a young and beautiful wife, and an interesting son, a youth of great promise, was waylaid and robbed—and by whom? by an officer of the Mexican army, bearing the commission of his government,—by a man who habitually received the bounty of his government, and whose sacred duty it was to defend the right and protect the injured. It might be said that one case of such a wrong could never justify the vengeance which Dominguez determined to take, and this no doubt would be true in our country; but here, this single outrage was but an index of what was daily occurring in all parts of the land, and those who committed the wrongs were the very people who were to determine any question growing out of them which might come up under the law. Of course justice was out of the question.

"These outrages occurring in all parts of the country had created a body of public enemies, who formed a band, the members of which distributed themselves on all the highways of the country, having a perfect understanding with each other, and recognizing each other by signs as infallible and as secret as those of masonry. Dominguez placed him-

self at the head of this band and became, as the truth must be told, the chief of robbers and exercised the most absolute command over the entire body on the whole route from Vera Cruz to the capital of Mexico. In this position it must be mentioned, perhaps we might say to his honor, that he strictly forbade murder. He and most of his gang had been despoiled, and, having no other remedy, they determined to live upon the spoils of others. The system was well known in Mexico, and a multitude of curious anecdotes might be told, illustrating the habits of these people, who were one day robbing on the highways and the next safely walking the principal streets of the principal cities, no one daring to point a finger at them. Merchants and others travelling on the highway gradually came to understand these gentlemen of the road, and rarely ventured on it without first securing an escort from among them, as they alone could furnish a safe conduct through the country. It is a remarkable fact that, when the American army arrived at Puebla, Dominguez was at large in that city, and, though perfectly known, the civil authorities dared not arrest him, and he was secretly pointed out to the American commander, General Worth, and General Worth, by request, caused his arrest.

"After a few days the General, having occasion to communicate with general head-quarters, then at Jalapa, sent for the robber-chief, in private, and in substance said to him: 'You are in the midst of enemies among your own people, at whose secret instigation you have been arrested. They seek your life—you owe them nothing. What is to prevent your serving us?'

"Dominguez answered, 'Nothing: what do you wish me to do?'

" 'You must bear a letter on the road for me—can you do it?'

" 'Give me the letter—it shall go safely wherever you direct it.'

"The letter was furnished to him, and safely delivered and an answer brought back. Soon after, General Scott arrived at Puebla, and General Worth sent Dominguez with a note to an officer of General Scott's staff, recommending him as a safe bearer of despatches.



"The staff officer (Colonel H.) had an interview with Dominguez, desiring him to go to Vera Cruz with important papers for all the American commanders on the road.

" 'I will take them,' says Dominguez.

" 'What will compensate you?' says the officer.

" 'I ask no compensation,' says the chief; 'pay me what you please. I ask nothing.'

"And it is a fact, perfectly well authenticated, that he has never asked for a dollar, but has taken whatever has been given him, without examination and without question. On one occasion, indeed, when suddenly ordered with a party of his men upon the road with despatches, he asked for means to defray his expenses; for, from the time he entered the service of the United States, he adopted the principles of the American army, and took nothing on the road without paying for it—as he had been most carefully instructed to do.

"So much for Manuel Dominguez himself; but allusion has been made to a company under his command in our service. This had a very small beginning, and, although it might have been increased some thousands, it has never exceeded one hundred men—that is, in the pay of the United States, though it has been difficult to keep the company down to that number. At first, only five *compadres*, as they are called, were taken into pay. These were employed as runners from Puebla, and by means of them the General-in-Chief was accurately informed of all Mexican movements in the towns adjacent to Puebla, and the highway was constantly explored, clear into the city of Mexico, at a time when everybody passing in and out of Mexico underwent the most rigid examination. These spies usually entered the city as market people from Chalco, by the way of the canal, selling apples, onions, etc.

"An American citizen, who had been many years a resident of Mexico, offered his services as an interpreter at Puebla. They were accepted. One day he passed and recognized Dominguez, as a man who had robbed him of his money on the highway, and had given him a *passport* (?) to secure his watch, and some other valuables about his person. The

passport was respected, for, though he was frequently stopped by members of the gang on different parts of the road, the moment he showed the passport, he was allowed to proceed without molestation. A conversation ensued, which was brought to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and it resulted in the formation of a company of men, to be under command of Dominguez, through whom all business was to be transacted *without papers* and *without signatures*, without pledges, and with no security but what human nature furnishes to those who know how to direct it. Next to the *five* first engaged was an addition of twelve made under the following circumstances:

“A Maltese by birth, who had learned some little English at Gibraltar, had been some time in Mexico, and was employed by one of the departments connected with head-quarters. He was a shrewd, ingenious, uneducated man of diminutive size, with a pleasant, agreeable countenance, indicating great cleverness and good-nature. He was found a curious genius, fond of Mexican *toggery*, or *taggery* rather, for he wore a dress in the extremest fashion for the common sort, covered with silver buttons and a profusion of silver *tags*, pendant from a small cape and from the cuffs and other parts of his dress. This man, being employed to look up competent guides—men who knew the roads and by-roads of the country—intimated to the staff officer, who had Dominguez in charge, that there might be a number of men in prison who were well acquainted with the road, and in all probability some had been lodged there from being a little too free upon it; he suggested that he had better be arrested and thrown into prison as a criminal, where, in a day or two, he would be able to gain all necessary information. Accordingly it was all arranged, and one day, on the public plaza, in the presence of a multitude of Mexicans, he was formally arrested by our guard and ordered into prison, then containing about one hundred prisoners, under charge of a Mexican police-guard. After a couple of days he was ordered out for examination, produced a list of twelve names of men who had been confined, some for three and five years, without trial on charges of robbery. The General's instructions on this subject were asked for, and he gave authority to release those who were not charged with murder or



rape, and who had been confined an unreasonable length of time without trial. The prison rolls were then examined and twelve men were taken out of prison and told the General had inquired into their cases—that they were unconditionally released—that nothing was required of them—that they were perfectly free. Dominguez was then put into communication with them, and such a meeting! Such embracing! These men had known each other before; that was plain enough. Eternal fidelity to each other was either pledged or renewed; and, with an allowance for the purpose, they made a merry night of it. These twelve, with the original five, were increased to a hundred by Dominguez himself, the whole affair of raising the company being entirely committed to him,—in such cases, half-confidence is worse than no confidence. His fidelity has been proved in a multitude of instances. A curious instance occurred at Puebla.

“The government of the State of Mexico, while the American troops occupied Puebla, was established at Atlixco, about twenty-five miles from Puebla. The government heard of the release of some Mexican prisoners, and, suspecting they might be employed by the United States, directed a free pardon to be made out for two of the principal men, and enclosed them in a third letter to Emanuel Dominguez, knowing that he would be acquainted with their whereabouts; and the government agent charged with this matter urged Dominguez to deliver the letters and to use his influence to induce the men to repair immediately to Atlixco, and receive the pardon and the bounty of the *generously* disposed Mexican government. Dominguez, already in our service unknown to the Mexicans, went immediately with all the papers to the staff officer, through whom he communicated with the American General, and, smiling at the idea of Mexican generosity, left all the papers with that officer, who has them yet in safe-keeping. But the most remarkable instance of fidelity occurred soon after the battle of Molino del Rey. While the American head-quarters were at Tacubaya, Santa Anna directed a letter to Dominguez, over his own signature, countersigned by the Secretary of State, and impressed with the great seal of the Republic of Mexico, a translation of which is as follows:



“ Mexican Republic,

“ Palace of the National Government,

“ Mexico, 11th September, 1847.

“ Office of the Minister of Foreign and Interior Relations.

“ Should one or more of the Poblanos, now in the service of the North Americans, abjure their criminal error and abandon the flag of an enemy, and, at last remembering that they are Mexicans, should they render to their Government and Country a service of importance — such as bringing over a considerable number of soldiers and wagon mules, set fire to the enemy’s ammunition magazines, or any other similar service, I offer them the pardon of their lives, and I will accord them a pardon for all past crimes; and furthermore I will grant them a reward adequate to any service they may render the republic.

“ In faith of which I sign these presents, authenticated by the Minister of Relations, and command that it should be stamped with the seal of the Supreme Government of the Nation.

“ Signed, L. DE SANTA ANNA.

(SEAL)

“ Countersigned, J. R. PACHECO.

“ This paper was left at the quarters of the company while the company was absent under arms on the 12th day of September, during the bombardment of Chapultepec, the day before the memorable storming of that fortress, and when it was yet to be decided whether the American army would be successful. In that period of uncertainty the letter was delivered to Dominguez by two or three men left at the quarters, who carried it to him, and handed it to him, amidst the thunder of cannon on both sides.

“ Here was a full pardon and offer of reward, endorsed by the highest authority in Mexico, but Dominguez did not hesitate an instant. He preferred American to Mexican faith. He immediately rode into Tacubaya and delivered the paper to the staff officer, Colonel H., his countenance indicating the most bitter scorn of the hollow and necessitous promises of one of the most faithless men living, whom he knew too well to trust. Besides a multitude of services rendered by this company as spies, couriers, etc., when it was impossible for an American to pass through the country, they have furnished escorts for trains to a limited extent, and on one occasion made a very important capture of Generals Torrejon and Gaona, with several other officers, and a number of men

near Nopaluca, east of Puebla. It has been said that at that time there was great difficulty in restraining the *Poblanos* (as the company is called by the Mexicans, having been raised at Puebla), but an explanation has been offered that General Gaona had, on some occasion, caused one of the officers of the company to be severely whipped. The chief evil suffered from the company has arisen from the fact that evil-disposed Mexicans have been more or less in the habit of assuming the badge of the company, and committing robberies upon their own people on the credit of the company. But this trick is now well known, and of late nothing of the kind has happened.

"It will be the solemn duty of our government, in the event of peace, to do something for the members of this company, who, whatever may be said of their relations to the Mexican Government, have been faithful to us, and have rendered important services which could not have been obtained from any other quarter or by any other means."

Moved by the necessity of having some provision made by the United States for the support of the exiles, General Hitchcock made an immediate appeal to Jefferson Davis, senator from Mississippi, who thereupon introduced into the U. S. Senate a bill for their relief. It was referred to a committee and there it slept, apparently unable to stir the cockles of a single heart. But Colonel Davis had been badly wounded in Mexico, and to him General Hitchcock wrote a second appeal giving some interesting additional details. It was as follows:

"NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 9, 1849.

"DEAR SIR: I write to ask your attention to the situation of Manuel Dominguez, the chief of the Mexican spies employed under the orders of General Scott in Mexico, for whose 'relief' you introduced into the Senate last session some resolution which was not acted upon.

"On reaching this city a few days since Dominguez came to see me, and on examination I found himself and family, nine persons, living without furniture in a single third-story room in the outskirts of the city and perfectly helpless, so far as I can judge from appearances.

"When Dominguez was taken into our service at Puebla



he was living decently in a comfortable house. He was soon afterwards offered high rewards if he would enter the Mexican service, but he never faltered for one moment in his fidelity to us. The value of his services can hardly be estimated by those who were not engaged in the war (you will understand them fully) and were of a kind likely to be disregarded when the immediate need for them was past. Indeed, the full extent of his services has never been known except to some two or three persons in the army.

“Dominguez was sent to me at Puebla by General Worth with a note stating that he had borne a despatch for him safely and might be of service to General Scott. I employed him, and by the orders of the General sent him with despatches for the commanders on the route to Vera Cruz, and he faithfully returned with answers. I then confidentially took into service five of his men, to whom twelve others were afterwards added. The Spy Company, so called, was not formed until a number of weeks later.

“By means of those first engaged under the direction of Dominguez I was enabled to keep the General accurately informed of the state of things on the main road from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, and fully advised of everything in the vicinity of Puebla. This was one of the means by which General Scott protected himself from false rumors, continually reaching him, of movements of the enemy. Reports were constantly coming in of threatened attacks upon Puebla, and of large forces passing from the City of Mexico to cut the line of communication with Vera Cruz. Many of these reports were disposed of very easily by the General himself without looking to the spies for information, though in other cases this information was often of highest value, and ought to be weighed by its estimate at the time.

“After the number of the spies was increased and the Mexicans suspected we had such persons in our employment some of them were detected and executed; but, notwithstanding this, Dominguez found others and continued to obtain information which could be had in no other way. It became necessary to be very guarded. In some cases they were sent to the City of Mexico itself even, without any paper whatever, and would report on their return, simply what they had seen



and heard. In other cases, to make them known to our friends and protect them from enemies, they were provided with a small piece of tissue paper, very small indeed, on which was written *a date*, with the words 'Trust the bearer,' with my signature; this they would hide in the seam of some part of their dress, or between the soles of their shoes; they would hide it in a lock of their matted hair or put it within a bullet button on their dress, or they would enclose it within the folds of a cigar, etc., etc. With this bit of paper they would go from one post to another and bring back verbal messages from our commanders with other valuable information. It was in this way that the General communicated with his reinforcements while coming up from Vera Cruz. As these services were secret, so, for that very reason, they have never been properly appreciated except by a very few persons. To understand them one must imagine the American army entirely isolated within the enemy's country at Puebla when it was impossible for any of our own men, except in large parties, to go with safety beyond the limits of the city; and then consider that through these spies chiefly the army reposed in perfect quiet and security from false reports so harassing to a body of men subject to be ordered under arms at all times, night and day, only to be dismissed after one, two, or three hours full of disgust at being needlessly disturbed.

"During the whole of the campaign to the City of Mexico General Scott never on one single occasion caused the troops to be turned out on a false alarm. To this healthy repose the spies under Dominguez contributed, not as the only means indeed, but yet they were indispensably important agents. The subordinate persons employed by Dominguez were but little known and are not now particularly exposed. They have gone to the Rio Grande frontier and will readily be dispersed and lost sight of; but not so with the leader of that band, Dominguez. He is a known and a marked man, and cannot live in his own country. On this account something seems due to him, not to be determined so much by 'his honor' as by what may become 'our own honor,' and perhaps sound policy. After the City of Mexico was occupied by the American army and the road had become tolerably quiet, the Spy Company made several expeditions to Vera Cruz and back again

to Mexico without ever losing a single despatch committed to them.

“Besides other evidences of fidelity I ought to mention that while our army was before the capital Santa Anna, over his own signature, sent a full pardon to Dominguez, countersigned by the Secretary of State, and bearing the great seal of the republic, if he would abandon our service; with a promise of reward if he would ‘seduce our soldiers to desert, drive off our mules, or destroy our magazines.’ The moment Dominguez received the paper (which I have now in my possession) he rode up to me upon a fine charger, halted, dismounted, saluted, and handed me the paper with a scornful smile that needed no interpretation. He had given me a similar paper at Puebla, sent to him by the government of the state of Puebla while at the town of Atlixco. Indeed, his fidelity was proved in every possible way, inso-much that when I left Mexico, we had no other escort to Vera Cruz but the Spy Company under Dominguez.

“Under all these circumstances I hope you will see the propriety of asking of Congress some proper allowance to be paid monthly or quarterly for the support of Manuel Dominguez, exiled on account of his services to the United States. It may be supposed that if Dominguez had any claim upon the generosity of the government it would have been stated by General Scott himself; but it should be recollected that General Scott left Mexico before peace was declared, while General Butler, his successor in command, had no personal knowledge of the services of Dominguez.

“Although it is many years since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, I hope I am not altogether forgotten, and must beg you will permit me to number myself among your friends as I am

“Very truly yours,

“E. A. HITCHCOCK,

“*But. Col. U. S. A.*

Col. JEFF. DAVIS,

U. S. Senate, Washington City.”

This setting forth of the facts in the case would seem to be a sufficient proof of the duty of this nation. It is not pleasant for a citizen of the United States to be compelled

to add here that the just and righteous bill never became a law; was never passed in either house; was never urged by the President as a desirable measure; was probably never reported from the committee; and that the man who trusted to the good faith of the country which he had so conspicuously and bravely served, and to which he had fled, trusted in vain. He was left to support his family as he could—to live or die as he could—in a city through which Poverty always walks and which during the very next winter was swept by malignant cholera. Without hesitation may we record the judgment of an eminent publicist that the United States is the most exacting of creditors and the most unscrupulous of debtors.



## CHAPTER XLIV

HITCHCOCK DISCHARGING TROOPS. BREVETTED FOR GAL-  
LANTRY. PRESIDENT-ELECT TAYLOR DISCUSSES CAMPAIGNS  
IN MEXICO. IRRITATED AGAINST SCOTT

DURING the last week of June General Hitchcock received an order to proceed to Alton, Illinois, to muster out of the service regiments of Mexican volunteers belonging in the Western States, and he spends from July 4th to July 17th reaching his destination. He reads everything in print on the boat, as usual; contemplates and comments on the Absolute, the relativity of the Finite, and the *Spiritual Diary* of Swedenborg; comes to the conclusion that the last-named philosopher "reflected so intensely upon certain principles that he became, not exactly deranged, but disordered in his mind to the extent that his subjective thoughts became objective." He visits St. Louis en route, finds his books and "everything safe from moths." He acknowledges that he feels queerly in the old familiar house alone, with the family absent, because he "left for the campaign in Mexico with not a few chances against ever returning."

"27th July, 1848. I have discharged a good many companies. . . . It is vain to deny it: these troops are unworthy the name of soldiers. The officers are, for the most part, little better than the men, . . . as a body without discipline and very ignorant of everything belonging to a soldier's duties. The whole volunteer system is indebted for all of its reputation to the regular army, without which the entire body of volunteers in Mexico would have been an undisciplined mob, incapable of acting in concert, while they would have incensed the people of Mexico by their depredations upon persons and property.

"St. Louis, 30th July, Sunday. . . . Have been looking

into my interminable boxes. I have absolutely too much baggage—five excellent trunks and twenty-two boxes, besides two entire travelling beds (iron) complete, three saddles and equipments. For years I have added to my stock of books until I have quite too many for a traveller.”

The diarist received on Aug. 19th a note from Senator John Bell telling him that his nomination for the brevet rank of Colonel for gallantry in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco had been confirmed by the U. S. Senate.

“Sept. 6, 1848. Fort Leavenworth, some 500 miles up the Missouri. Reached here on the 4th to discharge the Missouri volunteers. General Lane, new governor of Oregon, is preparing to go to Santa Fé, thence to San Diego on the Pacific, and thence up the coast to the Columbia, having been assured by all experts that the direct route is impracticable at this season. They count fifty days to South Pass, the entrance into the mountains, and from that time he would find snow the whole distance to Oregon City, and his horses and perhaps many of his men would perish.

“Fort Leavenworth, Sunday, Sept. 10. General Jo Lane left here this morning, with an escort of twenty-five men. He is the first governor appointed to Oregon territory. He thinks there may be 20,000 white people, in the Hudson Bay Company. He is a ‘pushing’ man and made some remarkable expeditions in Mexico. Fair sample of a Western man, 46 or 47 years old. Has a pleasant smile on rather hard features. Has been a successful working man. Has slight education, but talks sensibly about common things. Is good-hearted and ambitious.”

During the ensuing fortnight General Hitchcock waited impatiently for troops to arrive; found lodging with a citizen who frankly explained that he had “plenty of muskeeters and bugs”; fell upon Ward’s *Hindu Systems of Philosophy*, and studied and analyzed it till he overcame all annoyances and came to consider the Bhagavat Gita “equal to the ancient Greek philosophers excepting Aristotle. Liberation and absorption are salvation,” he says, and adds: “There is a wonderful calmness and composure in their mode of inquiry. It is remarkable to see how completely free from rant and cant they are—no denunciation—no threatenings of hell.”



From day to day and from week to week he waits, and meditates and speculates on the Durshunus and the Vedas and the great pantheistic treatises of the Hindoos. And finally we are left to conjecture as to whether the troops came or not. At last, on Sept. 25th, a general order arrives from Washington assigning the army to its several stations. His regiment is divided—four companies in New Mexico and six companies in Texas along the Rio Grande. "And so," the diarist sadly soliloquizes, "I am to be banished!"

At last he mustered out the delinquent troops and acknowledged that he found mental relief in activity. On Nov. 14th he started down the river and at St. Louis was glad to hear that Taylor had been elected to the Presidency. After visiting for a month he again started for New Orleans; and, hearing of cholera raging there, he once more made a will and signed his name to it, as when facing the dangers of the Mexican War; and now, as before, he not only disposed of his property, but added his scarcely changed philosophical conclusions.

"Baton Rouge, Dec. 27, 1848, 9 P.M. At the City Hotel, after seeing General Taylor, President-elect, Lieutenant-Colonel Bliss, . . . and others. The General this evening, of his own accord, spoke of General Worth, who, he said, had three or four days since offered to 'make explanations.' General T. told him it was unnecessary; and added to me that those matters are all past. He also dissented from Worth having command of Texas and New Mexico. General T. thinks that Congress ought not to legislate about slavery in the new territory, but says that if it does, and he should veto the law, California would be left four years without a government, and then the free States would have their own way. General Taylor talks to me very freely. He is opposed to the pretension of Texas to the Rio Grande and says that Congress ought to define her limits. Has not named a single member of his Cabinet yet, and seems troubled. Said he wished he could put the Presidency in somebody's hands and have nothing more to do with it. Spoke of James Watson Webb<sup>1</sup> continually writing to him for offices and asking to be sent Minister

<sup>1</sup> If General Webb was a persistent applicant for office he was equally a persistent champion, and this was recognized when he was appointed Minister to Austria in 1849 and to Brazil in 1861.



to England. 'These editors,' he said, 'seem to think that all the offices belong to them.'

"Dec. 29, 1848. General Taylor yesterday let out a little spleen against General Scott. Straws, they say, et cetera. The General (I have no recollection of what led to it) broke out with an assertion that the court of inquiry in Pillow's case allowed General Scott to ask a question about Captain Ker which he had no right to put, and the Court, he said very emphatically, should have stopped General Scott—making one or two other statements showing the direction of his feelings.

"I said nothing, at first, and Bliss also held still, but after a moment Bliss remarked that the question was within the rules and proper. The General returned to the assault, saying that Scott had no right to ask the general question as to whether the witness would believe Captain K. under oath, but he might inquire as to particular facts.

"I then remarked that the books prohibit asking into particular cases for the reason that it would make each case a subject of special inquiry. Here the General was at a stand: Bliss and myself had both come out against him. He looked black a little while, but said no more about it. I could see that his mind is disturbed against General Scott.

"Bliss tells me that the stories of the General in connection with Bragg are all false. He never said 'A little more grape, Captain Bragg,' nor did he say 'Major Bliss and I will support you.'

"General Taylor has talked a good deal about the battle of Buena Vista. Spoke of General Wool and General Churchill as having had the opinion that they were *beaten*, and he said that both of them were in favor of falling back to Saltillo on the night of 23d Feb., in which case (as Kingsbury suggests would have been the fact had General Taylor been killed) both armies would have been in full retreat on the morning of the 24th of February! The General says that Captain Carleton's account is a pretty fair one, on the whole, and that Kingsbury's is also a fair one, bating some eulogiums on himself (the General).

"Baton Rouge, Jan. 1, 1849. I have received the order of General Taylor granting me leave of absence until April 1st,

with orders then to join the four companies of my regiment at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis.

"On board the *Luna*, 50 m. from N. O., Jan. 5, A.M., going to New Orleans, cholera or no cholera. I suppose one place is about as dangerous as another along this river.

"Evening. Arrived at New Orleans about 2 P.M. City almost deserted. The cholera has driven almost everybody away and the levee is covered as far as the eye can reach with sugar, cotton, etc., which draymen can not be hired to haul away.

"Saturday, 6th Jan., 1849. I saw Dominguez to-day and, as I expected, he had been looking out for me in hopes that I might do something for him through Congress. He has been settled with in full as far as promises were made to him, but many think that he is entitled to some provision from the government, as he lost his own country in the service of ours. He was the principal spy employed by me for General Scott in Mexico, and rendered very important services.

"8th. Colonel ———, one of the Inspectors-General of the army, is at the Veranda, in the last stage of cholera. His habits have been imprudent. His remarkable defence of Fort Sandusky in 1813 is memorable. If he had failed the garrison would have been massacred. General Jackson refused to notice his habits of intemperance, saying that he had 'done enough to entitle him to be drunk for the rest of his life.'

"6 P.M., and Colonel ——— has just died.

"11th Jan., N. O., evening. I to-day saw Dominguez, the chief of the spies in our service. He tells me that he went to Washington last summer and saw the Secretary of War—'a large, elderly man,'—who asked him if he knew of anything that General Scott did in Mexico that was wrong. Dominguez said 'No.' The Secretary [Marcy] then assured him that he could speak freely and would be protected! Infamous!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that both Taylor and Scott were Whigs, and that both repeatedly charged the administration of Polk with purposely embarrassing and retarding their military operations.

## CHAPTER XLV

NEW ORLEANS IN CHOLERA TIME. HITCHCOCK'S RECKLESS EX-  
POSURE. SEEKS HEALTH AT HOT SPRINGS. CHARACTER-  
ISTIC REMINISCENCE. FURLOUGH TO VISIT EUROPE

GENERAL HITCHCOCK went to New Orleans on Jan. 5, 1849, and did not leave it for the north till Feb. 27th, though the city was stricken and desolated with cholera. Why he stayed there seven weeks in the midst of pestilence, when all the inhabitants were flying for their lives who could get away, does not appear; indeed, it is not obvious why he went there at all, as he seems not to have been called there by either professional or personal business. But, wherever he is, this man seems always to be walking up and down the earth alone. If he went and tarried in the "almost deserted city" for the purpose of testing his philosophy it was a more Quixotic mission than he ever before or afterwards performed. He found some chance acquaintances still lingering there; indeed, he followed some of them to the grave, and expressed his repugnance at "serving as pall-bearer." It is not altogether impossible that he sought a city whose population had fled because he wanted a quiet time to study: at any rate, he pursued his studies and contemplations there with great diligence. He says he has a premonition that his health will soon fail him and he wishes to learn all he can. Yet his health is so tolerably good, and he himself is so prosperous in his affairs, that he grows half superstitious and is reminded of the ring of Polycrates and his fate.

As usual, he buys rare old books during this sojourn in a city whose other denizens have something else to think about. He now flanks and reinforces his Spinoza, Bacon, and Locke with Voltaire's romances; John Barclay's *Argenis*;



Trajano Bocalini's *Advertisements from Parnassus*, and the *Politic Touchstone* of 1769; an English version of Malebranche, in folio, 1694; and the military essays of Sir James Turner, knight, folio of 1683.

Once more he writes much upon the idea of Substance and the definition of the Absolute, and comments freely on the personal character and habits of Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Lamb, De Quincey, and Wordsworth—especially the weaknesses of the first named. The diary is full of interest to metaphysicians.

During this sojourn in New Orleans, in 1849, General Hitchcock saw much of General and Mrs. Gaines, and in their family met Miss Delia Bacon, whom Hawthorne introduced to the world as a "gifted woman," and who, in 1857, brought out her work to prove that Bacon and others wrote the poems and plays of Shakespeare. At this time her opinions were nebulous—not very distinctly outlined—or, as Hitchcock noted, "obscure." She explained volubly and made marginal notes in his copy of *Hamlet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but he only faintly comprehended her intent. The fact probably was that her startling theory was as yet only partially developed and was therefore inadequately stated.

The seeds of disease which had been abundantly, though almost unconsciously to himself, planted in Hitchcock's system during the trying times of the Mexican war now began to make their painful results manifest, and he started for the Hot Springs of Arkansas on February 27th, bearing with him the commands of a favorite physician.

"Half way up to Little Rock. . . . Reading Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*—half amused, half displeased, a little instructed. Burton was a weak, fantastical, superstitious old fool, and, anticipating some such characterization, admits it in advance, which shows some ingenuity. 'Thirty years' in a library, filling his head with all sorts of useless odds and ends of learning, and without a basis in himself for reducing what he read to reasonable reason. What a monstrous faith in devils and spirits! No system or order—things the most incongruous and contradictory. . . . Perhaps the destruction of the old libraries is no great loss after all—what a multitude of fools' books does he quote!"

The invalid—for Hitchcock was really an invalid now, having been informed by his physician that he had “incipient paralysis”—arrived at the Hot Springs on March 9th. The diary thenceforward for many pages has a very local color and medicinal flavor. The writer describes the springs in detail, gossips pleasantly about the patients, records his symptoms, and acknowledges from time to time that he is getting “no better very fast.” Here, too, he resumes his philosophical readings.

“May 6. I must lose in my profession by remaining here. The part of my regiment with which I was to go from Jefferson Barracks to New Mexico has started on its march—and I am absent! I cannot help it.

“11th May. Finished reading the letters of the Turkish Spy. I think the anonymous author was an Italian deist, yet falling short of the calm enthusiasm of Spinoza. He had to combat an almost universal belief in what was called Judicial Astrology. Its very name is now almost forgotten, though in the age of that author it was well-nigh adopted into the religious faith of the world. Kings and nobles and even the commoners who were able had the “nativities” of their children cast, and carefully consulted astrologers in regard to their own fate and the fate of their friends. There is not a more curious chapter in the history of opinion than that which records how easily one age lives in the opinions which brought upon their authors persecution, obloquy, and death. There is nothing more futile than to think that any doctrine is to be supposed true because we find it supported by those persons we happen to be surrounded by; for, if we travel ever so little, or even read ever so little (which is a sort of travel), we shall find every opinion defended that man can imagine.”

The months of invalidism and water treatment at the Hot Springs must have passed sluggishly enough; but Hitchcock beguiled the tedium by using the time in self-research, in persistent readings of recondite works, and in no less persistent discussions with himself of metaphysical hypotheses and philosophical speculations. Some of these, carefully recorded in his diary, seem useful and are certainly interesting. Example:

“I have always been unwilling to take anything on trust



in matters of knowledge. I recall that when studying astronomy at West Point we were one day directed to calculate an eclipse and were referred to certain tables in Enfield which we were to use according to directions given in the text. All of the class, seventeen in number, except myself, immediately set at work with their slates and began to put down figures from the tables in the order and manner directed in the text. This was to me merely a mechanical operation, and I hesitated at first and then inquired of the professor, 'old Colonel Mansfield,' how the tables had been prepared. He talked a little about 'the problem of the three bodies,' but gave no satisfactory explanation. Perhaps he told us all he knew. At any rate I lost interest; I let the time pass idly by, and, while not refusing, I omitted to make a 'calculation of an eclipse,' while some of the others plumed themselves not a little on having gone through the mere mechanical form of taking certain figures from certain columns of certain tables, and, by adding and subtracting, multiplying and dividing, according to directions, having brought out a certain result according to principles of which they knew nothing. I could not be satisfied with that as knowledge."

And occasionally the diarist intermits his meditations and his estimate of unseen dynamics by summing up to date and trying to satisfy himself that he is making progress, however slowly:

"Notwithstanding the obscurity of this matter there are some points which seem quite fixed in my mind; for example:

"There can be but one universe—one world (in the largest sense)—not two worlds, a here and a hereafter.

"There can be but one eternity. Eternity does not begin at death; it cannot have had any beginning; I am in eternity now.

"The best division of worlds is perhaps into the known and the unknown: I rather like this idea.

"The most enduring satisfaction results perhaps from the conscientious but not too fervent pursuit of truth, and this has been my case for many years.

"Freedom and necessity are two words which we apply to the same phenomenon, according as we look at that phenomenon in the past or in the future—in its causes or its effects."



Having remained at the Hot Springs from March 1st to June 21st the invalid concluded to go somewhere else for a change of treatment and started at once for Little Rock and St. Louis, where "cholera is frightful."

"Sternwheeler *Armstrong*, June 23, 1849. . . . The cholera is on the river. Several have recently been its victims and the boat is stripped of its carpets and cleansed (so they say). I slept on board last night. An old mosquito bar let in millions of mosquitoes that could not find their way out again. After enduring tortures from them all night, I let them out this morning."

The philosopher had evidently read the Vedas and Puranas to good purpose and learned the Oriental lesson of the sacredness of life. He reached Cairo on June 26th.

"On shore there is an old frame building apparently unoccupied at the extreme point where the Mississippi and Ohio meet, bearing the sign 'Hotel'; a few hundred yards further up the Ohio are three or four decayed wooden buildings including two stores—dry (and wet) goods—whiskey plenty—and a few more contemptible shanties. There are two large steamers run ashore, stripped of their engines, and used as hotels, and several old-fashioned flatboats up in the swamp used as 'saloons.' This is Cairo in 1849—the same as it was eight years ago, plus cholera."

It is a coincidence perhaps worth noting that the time here referred to is about that in which Dickens visited the spot and on his return home immortalized Cairo in his *American Notes* and "Eden" in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

"St. Louis, June 30. Half past 12 at night. Cannot sleep and have lit a candle. I am at my old home—my friend's. The family are not particularly alarmed about the cholera, which now rages in the city, carrying off more than 100 inhabitants daily out of a population reduced by death and desertion from some 65,000 to 35,000. The mortality is tremendous. Funeral processions in the street, but little business. . . . I have been sick during the evening and have just taken some cholera drops. If I am to be a victim of cholera, I do not know that I have any particular objection at this time, except that I would wish not to give trouble and alarm to my friends here."

He here calls attention to his previous "wills" inscribed in his diaries and mentions the numbers of the little books wherein they may be found. He amends sundry dispositions of his real and personal property, his library—now some thousands of volumes,—the letters from "admirable friends," and "the commissions of my father, signed by both President Washington and the elder Adams."

"As to my opinions," he writes during these morning hours, "they have been strengthening with years. Although I understand but little, I know enough to be content, and wish those much joy who know more. . . . My convictions will chiefly be found in my note-books. They have been tending to unity since 1840, and I note here simply that I have nothing to disavow in them, immature though they may be. With regard to the Scriptures I adopt the views of Strauss chiefly, and think the controversial world would be improved by adopting his temper.

"St. Louis, July 10. Yesterday I received leave of absence for twelve months for the benefit of my health from General Scott, with leave to ask permission from the War Department to visit Europe. (This is required by Army Regulations.) Wrote yesterday asking for such permission, adding that if I could be useful while in Europe in furnishing information of current events or otherwise, I should esteem myself especially honored by receiving the commands of the Secretary of War."

## CHAPTER XLVI

HEALTH GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE. TAKES LEAVE OF PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SCOTT. CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE BRUSA BATHS. SEES SULTAN AND REVIEWS TURKISH TROOPS. QUARANTINED IN GREECE. A QUIET INSANE ASYLUM. ATHENS VISITED. VESUVIUS IN ERUPTION. HEARS OF PRESIDENT TAYLOR'S DEATH. A COURSE AT WIESBADEN

THE health of General Hitchcock had been going from bad to worse ever since the trying and exhausting summers in Mexico. He had come to doubt if he should ever be a well man again, and when distinguished physicians recommended the baths of Germany and Turkey he agreed to try the prescription "as a last resort." On receipt of the news that such a long leave of absence had been granted him, therefore, he started eastward at once and on July 22d arrived at West Point. There he "shook hands with General Scott and members of his staff."

"I was soon informed that, on hearing of the death of Colonel Duncan, General Scott immediately addressed a letter to the War Department recommending me for the appointment of Inspector-General of the army of the United States. This is perhaps all the honor I shall receive, and this is well worth having. . . . I have leave from the War Department to visit Europe. Not to be wanting in mere form, I have respectfully applied to the President and the Secretary of War for the position General Scott has recommended me for, but it is doubtless already decided not to give it to me. I have many things against me; first, my association with General Scott, to whom the President is hostile (not even allowing the General to establish head-quarters in Washington); then, I have come here where Scott is instead of going to Washington, etc., etc.



"Aug. 6, 1849, New York. I have been to Washington and talked a couple of hours with the President, but as he said nothing about the Inspector-General vacancy I said nothing. After leaving the White House, however, I dropped him a note. Have just received from him what he probably considers a friendly letter, in which he says that knowing the state of my health he thought I would neither desire nor accept the appointment. His letter dodges the subject: so be it."

During the first week of August Hitchcock started for Europe, his first visit there. He stayed a month in London; four days in Holland; made his way in turn to Cologne, Leipsic (during a fair), Vienna—"very, very splendid, but painful to look on when one reflects on the tyrannical system by which it is supported"—Buda-Pesth, and at last Constantinople, *via* the Black Sea.

In this book of 193 pages, filled with the diarist's delicate vertical writing, there is not a paragraph of introspection or metaphysics. It is wholly appropriated to descriptions of his travels, the last half being allotted to the strange sights and experiences of the Sultan's capital. He is awakened by the sentinel muezzin, sees the dervishes in their protean exercise, inspects in slippers the great mosque of St. Sophia, patronizes the fantastic bazaars, visits Scutari, crosses the Bosphorus, takes innumerable Turkish baths, "every one of them an event," is called upon and offered courtesies by members of the American legation, sees the Sultan and assists the Turkish general in reviewing the troops of the empire, and inspecting forts, evolutions, and big guns. He observes and records many of the singular local fashions and observances, among them this: "Turks never thank any one for a favor: they thank God." Virtue is its own reward.

Our traveller concluded that his health was not improving and started for the cities of the Mediterranean on Dec. 8, 1849. Apparently not much escaped his attention. In his winter diary he tells with great elaborateness of multitudinous strange sights and sounds. He describes the Hellespont and recalls many classical allusions to the region and to the Cyclades and the other romantic isles of Greece, half veiled in the mists of the December morning and of poetry and antiquity. On the steamer is a Turkish bey and six wives, who are objects of

attention. At Smyrna and Trieste, Dec. 8, he resolves to go to Athens, and on the 11th while on his way is intercepted and put in quarantine at Syra. The passengers are all imprisoned in the lazaretto, and he is assigned to a cell fronting the sea for four days. It is tedious. He has time for philosophizing. "The people are over kind to me, taking such special care lest I should catch some disease from them! I shall have to watch every trivial occurrence, *pour passer le temps*." Nobody speaks English, but he makes himself understood in French. He tells us what sort of people his companions seem to be, and how they divert or occupy themselves. Is evidently amused by his environments: "Fifty other listless prisoners—a quiet insane asylum. They saunter around in a small circle, as if imagining they are thinking of something." The acoustic properties of the cell proved to be good and he exclaims. "Why did the devil induce me to pack away my flute in the box I left with our consul at Smyrna? This is one of the finest musical rooms I have seen these many, many years, with a fine reverberation."

The hours are heavy. No books. So he watches his unhappy associates and indulges in conjectures about them.

At last he escapes from his cell, waits four days more for a steamer, wrestles with passports and customs, and reaches Athens on Dec. 20th. Here he exhibits much energy in seeing all the famous ruins and memorable places. He purchases many souvenirs of the historic spot, climbs Hymettus, and Pentelicus, examines the celebrated marble quarries, goes to Eleusis, and is not greatly impressed with the average modern Greeks who mislead a stranger in his wanderings, beg of him at every turn, and overcharge him at the hotel. And he indignantly breaks out:

"Shades of Socrates, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Plutarch! Let me curse these modern Greek reptiles and fall into thy ranks! I would rather be damned with Plato and Bacon than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus.

"At dinner yesterday introduced to a Greek who understood English, and on my confessing the satisfaction I had found in visiting the remains of antiquity, he thanked me as if I had intended a compliment to him! What had he to do with the scattered fragments of his country's former grandeur?



So a Greek guide said, 'There *our* fleet lay going to the siege of Troy.'

The Colonel had caught cold on the Mediterranean, of course, and he tells in his daily chronicle what he did for it:

"Finding some rum I have ordered some aqua caliente, sugar, etc., and have drank a hot drink—lemon-juice in it—a sort of punch. Don't like it. I am not entitled to the smallest credit for my sobriety, for I do not take the smallest pleasure in drinking liquors of any kind. There is nothing, so far as I know, which I do to excess, and if this is not temperance what is? If I were to live my life over again, I do not know how I could change it in these particulars. I have been something of a necessarian since 1819, and so far as that doctrine has influenced me, it has been a restraint; for I have never tolerated the idea that I could do anything without its proper and necessary effect.

"Calimachi, Greece, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1850; New Year's Day, the middle (?) of the nineteenth century, finds me here, on the east side of the strait of Corinth."

He visits Corinth and wanders among its ruins for two days, proceeds to Corfu on Jan. 5th, thence north to Ancona, Trieste, Venice, his entrance to which he rapturously records on Jan. 12th.

This ordinarily calm and undemonstrative man has enthusiasms in Venice which, without hesitation or affected stoicism, he transmits to his pages. But he also notes that his health does not mend.

"Perhaps my health is permanently broken—at 51. I positively deny that I am sad about it, yet I would wish to have good health and would make any sacrifice to secure it. I have lived to know that I am immortal—not by the gift of God but by the very same law which secures his immortality—not in my body, as I am, but in the essence or principle without which I should have no body, which essence is self-existent—was never created and can never die. I see no reason for concealing this conviction, though there are fools enough in the world who regard this sort of language as blasphemy."

In Constantinople, Athens, and Venice he was most impressed by a marvellous development of the fine arts which he had not before known. Music was always a solace of



his solitude, and now came architecture, painting, and sculpture with their unlimited satisfactions. He also sought every opportunity to increase his knowledge of the physical sciences during this tour of Europe and frequently exclaimed with pleasure on hearing of some new achievement of the geologist or astronomer. In the cities of the Levant he found little scientific research and much devoutness.

From "the Queen of the Adriatic" he made his way with brief pauses through the chief cities of Italy,—to Padua, to Verona, to Milan, to Genoa, to Leghorn, to Pisa, to Florence, to Pisa again, to Civita Vecchia, to Naples, where he arrived on Jan. 30th.

February and March he spends in Italy, delighted with the great art of the Renaissance and making copious records of opinions, criticisms, emotions. His pencil was never before so busy or his diaries so many. He chronicles his impressions in six or eight compact pages every day. The most of this is written for his own subsequent use—"to jog my memory," as he puts it, as to places and dates. During these winter months he visits and revisits the principal show-places of Italy—the large cities, their famous environs, and their art-treasures.

He revels in reminiscences concerning the historic places of Naples, visits the suburbs, and identifies in his own mind "the spot where Shelly felt the lines written in dejection on the Bay of Naples."

He finds Vesuvius in violent eruption and hears its roar fifteen miles distant, "not sharp and quick, like the noise of artillery,—more like the echo of a piece of heavy ordnance from a single face of a mountain with an irregular surface." Every five or six seconds—"as regularly as the beating of a watch." Later it roars without intermission—"the roar reaching us distinctly in the city amid the rattling of wagons, the ringing of bells, the dash and moan of the sea, and the hum of the multitude. People are alarmed. Very unusual. Greatest eruption of the generation. Bay and surrounding country hidden by pall of smoke. Damage reported to the country lying under the mountain.

"Been in the streets looking at the carnival of the Neapolitans, and regretting that ready-made clothing does not grow

on trees for their sakes, in gardens open to the public. With this and macaroni these would be the happiest people on earth.

"Sunday, Feb. 10. Dined with Mr. Marsh,<sup>1</sup> our Minister to Constantinople. In the afternoon joined his party to Vesuvius, whose present eruption is more tremendous and terrible than any man living here can remember. We started off about four o'clock. Passed some Italian troops preceded by a brass band, led by a gorgeous drum-major. In the midst of his flourishes, I could not help thinking that if he had a grain more of sense it would spoil him for a drum-major. In two coaches we passed through Portici and Torre del Greco, around the mountain to a point nearly opposite Naples, winding our way by torchlight through villages and vineyards, occasionally getting lost and turning back for some new pathway, hardly to be called a road, till finally at 12 o'clock, midnight, we found ourselves amid a crowd of other people in front of a lake of burning lava over six miles long (east and west) and with an average breadth exceeding two miles, making its way slowly down, at the rate, I estimated, of forty feet an hour. We stood in the midst of an extensive vineyard, in a forest of small trees set out for the purpose of supporting the vines at intervals of ten or twelve paces. The lava had a depth of about ten feet, the upper surface of which had slightly cooled, but showing fire everywhere. As the lava moved slowly forward, encircling trees, first at their bases and then higher up as the flood increased, and of course setting them on fire, the flames along the front thus added to the vivid red of the lava, with the vast volumes of illuminated smoke—all this made a *scene*.

"Villagers for miles around were assembled, some of whom were lying on the ground looking at the scene of devastation, while others (the poor) were busily collecting wood for their homes. From the top of the mountain, which seemed almost over us, but yet concealed by smoke, there belched forth a continual roar, like the breaking of immense waves on an

<sup>1</sup> George P. Marsh, the eminent author, diplomatist, and philologist, made such a brilliant success of this mission that he was appointed by President Lincoln Minister to Italy and held the mission for twenty-one years.



abrupt shore, mingled with occasional reports, like those of artillery.

"I am now convinced that ordinarily the flow of lava, unless very near the cone, or crater, is so measured and slow that any one having the use of his limbs can retire before it without the least difficulty, and therefore I am certain that very few people have ever been imbedded in lava, and I cannot conceive why any one was destroyed in 79, at Pompeii, five miles from the base of the cone. Probably by an earthquake or ashes.

"Last evening when we were on this side of the mountain—windward side—we could distinctly see the crater, and its roar was awful and terrific. Large bodies of molten lava, at short intervals, were thrust upward in a cylindrical form with a spherical top. The column would rise through the air, I cannot say how far, some said 900 feet, in an unbroken mass, vividly red, and then would open out or explode and break into millions of stars, which would continue to rise to various elevations and then, describing regular curves, would fall into and around the crater,—something like what is called a star rocket, but infinitely more brilliant and grand.

"This eruption has already destroyed a large amount of property and burned many buildings, some clusters rising in importance to the dignity of villages.

"Tuesday, Feb. 12. . . . When we were, two days since, in front of the lake of lava on the Pompeian side, the lava was not more than one or two hundred yards from the road. Here we observed a church and many other buildings. As we came away and passed from under the smoke so as to see up the mountain to the crater, we noticed a perfect river of lava of wonderful brilliance from the very top of the cone to the bottom. We have since learned that this was a fresh outburst; that it crossed the road at the two points in half an hour after we left it, and that, if we had remained, we should have been caught in the fork of the lava-flow, with our retreat to the carriages cut off. We should then have been compelled to foot it around through the lower-lying vineyards and get home as we could. That new accession of lava destroyed the church the same night. . . . A German was killed that evening in venturing too near the



crater, and two others (one an American from our navy) seriously, perhaps mortally, wounded by a shower of red-hot scoria. . . . I think Naples will some time be destroyed by its terrible neighbor. God be thanked, I have seen this volcano in action: but I did not need it to be taught the lesson of my own insignificance.

"Beggars everywhere besetting me—besieging me—running me down—even in the cathedral—old men, old women, one-armed and one-legged people, boys and girls, all pressing around."

Our traveller is not only annoyed by beggars, but he is singularly exasperated by the extortions of hotels and places of entertainment and of all who can force their attentions on a foreigner in Italy—singularly, because he is of a remarkably calm and placid temperament and this natural tranquillity is reinforced by his philosophy. He labels these exactions "blackmail" and "swindles on strangers," and moves along patiently concluding that "there must be about so much of this in life."

In Rome 7000 French soldiers held the city, which seemed to the diarist highly improper. "Great Ghost of Julius Cæsar!"

Travel in Italy in 1850 was almost entirely by stage—generally a poor outfit and for an invalid fatiguing beyond conception. But this mode of conveyance enabled the traveller to see more of the rural population than are visible in detail from a railroad car—more, often, than he wished to see, for he had to dodge highwaymen at the cross-roads. He spent all the time he could in Florence, and at the Pitti and other galleries studied and took copious notes.

He left Florence in the evening of March 18th, "in order to reach the vicinity of Bologna by daylight—a region infested by stage-robbers." By travelling night and day he reached Milan in three days—"on the whole a delightful journey, through the vineyards of Italy. I have come all the way from Rome by diligence," he adds; and from Milan he coaches northward for three days more over the Simplon Pass, to Geneva. With much regret he omits Mont Blanc from his itinerary on account of the intense cold, and takes passage, again in the diligence, for Paris. At the frontier is examined,

but allowed to retain his pistol "on account of rank." Arrives in Paris on March 30th, and finds many friends.

"Met Mr. Kendall of the *Picayune*. He tells me that his history of the Mexican War is just ready to come out. Has just received a copy of Major Ripley's book,—a book prepared at General Pillow's residence in Tennessee and really little more than a defence of General Pillow and an attack on everybody else, even my humble self. I made the first exposé of the charlatan pretensions of General Pillow."

For nearly two months our traveller tarries in Paris. He apparently leaves little uninspected that is accessible. It is not necessary to review the sights of the gay capital here. Louis Napoleon was President and was striving to amuse the people. The great Haussmann was already reconstructing Paris on lines of novel beauty. But there had been fighting in the streets within a few months, and everybody looked for tumult and barricades again. The military visitor inspected the troops, estimated their probable strength, studied the situation, and tarried from week to week that he might see whatever was to happen—reading Comte's *Positive Philosophy* in the intervals of sight-seeing and conjecture.

"Paris, May 18, 1850.—My landlady promises fighting in the streets to-morrow—but she knows nothing about it. I am booked for Brussels to-morrow morning, but I would wait if I thought there would be an attempt at revolution here."

The next day he is at Brussels and Waterloo. The "revolution" does not immediately materialize. More than a year passes before the President launches his famous *coup d'état* in the face of France and makes himself Emperor in fact and name.

Through all his sight-seeing and metaphysics this traveller is compelled to keep constantly in mind—himself. His infirmities, which he attributes to inevitable exposures during the Mexican War, seem to increase rather than diminish. He tries many famed physicians and many methods, and now resolves to try the German springs, which he reaches, *via* Bonn, Cologne, the Rhine, to Wiesbaden in Nassau, his destination, on May 24th. While philosophically going through the daily routine prescribed for an invalid, he finds time for serious meditations.



At Wiesbaden he stays from May 24th to Sept. 2d, and counts himself among the invalids hopeful of recovery. Here he has time to kill, and few to whom he can talk with profit; so he talks to himself more than ever, and during the 100 days of medication he adds 306 compact written pages to his diary. Reads much French and puzzles over idioms. Some of the time is spent in sight-seeing, some in making brief excursions to Switzerland, German cities, and places in the vicinity, some in philosophical reading, some in introspection, more in extraspection.

"Wiesbaden, Nassau, June 8, 1850. Under advice of a doctor, who half starves me and keeps me in the house. . . . I see that an expedition has really been 'got up' at New Orleans designed to revolutionize Cuba and from 4000 to 10,000 men under Lopez are said to be engaged in it. U. S. vessel ordered to intercept. Much excitement. . . . The English haters of the United States ought to see prospectively the dissolution of our Union as the probable result of the extension of our territory. . . . England talks of interfering with us. She had better not!"

In his tour around Switzerland and the adjoining German kingdoms and duchies—Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Berne, Baden Baden, Strasburg, Frankfurt, Heidelberg,—he reads a little, speculates more, and observes most.

"By the way, a lady on the steamboat yesterday praised her dog to me (almost every lady in Paris has a dog which she proudly leads through the streets with a cord). She told me that her dog was very remarkable—that it had a very short tail, and in wagging it, wagged it up and down instead of horizontally like common dogs! I thought of the pump-handle shake and wanted to laugh, but I held my countenance and praised the dog—'very remarkable dog' to give a pump-handle shake of its tail. Quite unique! Why not note these funny little trifles, instead of vain searches after the Infinite and Absolute?"

On July 26th he hears of the sudden death of General Taylor, President. He had previously committed to his diary his recollections and frank opinions of his bluff old colonel:

"During the Mexican War Taylor had taken a violent dislike to Scott. He was a man of strong and blind prejudices,



like many a strong-minded but uneducated man. He was very ambitious. Though without book-learning he felt himself 'honest and as good as anybody.' He disliked most of our men in power. He saved money and lived closely. His table was indeed well supplied, but in his dress he was careless and almost slovenly. He hated bitterly; but neither his hatreds nor his friendships were intelligently formed. They were mere passions. He entered the army during the War of 1812, and reached the rank of Major. At its close he was retained as Captain with the brevet of Major. He declined to accept the rank and retired to civil life; but he was taken into service again before the expiration of a year as Major. In 1820, he was promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel, but in 1821 the army was reduced and he was again cut down—retained as Major with the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. I was with him when he received the news. He was extremely mortified and again declined. But Colonel Mitchell dying he was brought into service again as Lieutenant-Colonel. He was promoted in due course to the rank of Colonel and brevetted Brigadier for services in Florida, and subsequently made Major-General for the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, or the taking of Monterey, I forget which. Finally he fought the glorious battle of Buena Vista, for which he was elected President. He was a brave soldier, but excepting this quality and a certain bull-headed obstinacy he was almost without the qualifications of a great general. He had not skill in making what are called combinations, and carried everything by a kind of blind force. When his passions were not brought into play he was exceedingly kind-hearted. He was very fond of telling and listening to anecdotes with point to them. He would sit by the hour, day after day, in quiet garrison life, and hear and tell stories—the same stories; but he studied nothing and depended upon others for the preparation of his despatches. His beautiful reports during the Mexican War were written by his Assistant Adjutant-General, W. W. S. Bliss. If he attempted to write anything himself it had to be rewritten to 'put it into English.' "

Living a monotonous and, as it were, a vegetable life at this famous old watering-place, Wiesbaden, the invalided philosopher falls back upon his books,—Pascal, Niebuhr,

Schiller, Goethe, Rochefoucault, Hegel, Fichte. He explains to his diary, and more and more as the months go by he re-reads Spinoza, and thinks and quotes Spinoza. Indeed, he may truthfully be said to have become a Spinoza-intoxicated man. Having pretty nearly committed the *Ethics* of the illustrious Jew to memory, he is now reading it in French,—it and other writings of the great Dutchman. He translates fourteen chapters of the famous tract on *Theology and Politics*, and he says (July 26th):

“I am more and more struck with the clearness and calmness of that wonderful man. It is vain for me to hesitate to say that I find myself more in harmony with Spinoza than with any other man, dead or alive,—not that I fully understand or agree with him in all his demonstrations in the *Ethics*, but I understand no other writings better, and there is a spirit in his investigations above all praise. . . . I am so earnestly carried forward in the *Tract* that I cannot stop to write. . . . If—if—love could last, I would throw philosophy to the winds, or *that* should be my philosophy; but of all things in the world, unless it be the ‘collied lightning,’ it is the briefest and most illusory, though it be an illusion never to be forgotten and never to be regretted. . . . Philosophy is the first and foremost blessing in the world.”

## CHAPTER XLVII

WELCOME HOME. A BETTER AMERICAN. THE CONSTITUTION  
AND THE "HIGHER LAW." FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.  
DANGEROUS DOCTRINE DENOUNCED. IN WASHINGTON ON  
SPECIAL SERVICE

THE traveller had not forgotten home, its requirements and its attractions. After being five weeks at Wiesbaden scrupulously taking baths and following the elaborate advice of the doctors, he felt sure that his health had not improved at all and became impatient to return to America. So he left Wiesbaden on Sept. 2, 1850, and reached London three days later, and Liverpool, *via* Eastern England and Scotland, on Sept. 21st. He utilized four days in going through Scotland and Wales, and took ship for New York on the 25th.

"Made Halifax Light and, firing signal guns, threw over twelve to fifteen kegs with iron keels and a flag (white, with black spot in the middle, held aloft on a stick three or four feet long stuck in the bunghole). Within the keg was a small tin box containing slips of news to be communicated from Halifax if found. The New York papers employ a boat to be on the lookout."

Arrived at New York on "the noble ship" on October 9th—fourteen days from Liverpool.

General Scott sent complimentary salutations from Washington and ordered General Hitchcock to that city, to serve as a member of a board of officers—composed of General Scott, General Jesup, General Wool, and three others, "to settle questions of rank among officers of the army." His daring circular letter on brevet rank and his bitter controversies with General Scott upon the question had admirably qualified him for useful service on such a board.

During the slow progress of the studies of this board Gen-



eral Hitchcock found time to write an article for a Washington newspaper in opposition to Secretary Seward's affirmation that people ought to obey a higher law than the Constitution. This protest was printed conspicuously and copied widely. At the moment Seward's speech was being generally discussed. His critic begins by declaring that, "like many others who go abroad from this happy country, I have returned a better American, if possible, than when I left these Western shores," and then proceeds to make an earnest plea for the supremacy of the Constitution. The patriotic spirit of it can be given by a brief quotation:

"Among the dangerous doctrines I hear on my return—the more dangerous because making an illusory appeal to conscience—is one, that there is a higher principle than the Constitution of the United States, or a 'higher duty' than maintaining the Constitution. I deny that there is any such higher duty which is at all in conflict with the Constitution.

"In all human affairs, as the world's history shows, a government—I had almost said the worst possible government—is better than anarchy, except, indeed, that out of anarchy a government of some kind, generally an absolute government, is sure to arise; and to bring about a change of government, when no other means are left, it may be necessary, it may even be a duty, to involve a country temporarily in anarchy. But can any one be so insane as to imagine that we in this beautiful and prosperous country, in this blessed land, which is the hope of the oppressed all over the world—can any one be so insane as to imagine that the government of the United States is in such a condition that, in order to change it, it is necessary to plunge the country into anarchy! Yet this 'higher duty' sentiment, as I hear it uttered, leads directly to anarchy; for it counsels disobedience or resistance to the proper laws of the land as unconstitutional, without even an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, which was created by the Constitution for the determination of such questions; and this on the delusive assumption that there is a law higher than the Constitution itself.

"While I was abroad, my countrymen, I was everywhere struck with a single peculiarity in which our government

differs from those of Europe; a principle in which we have taken a lead in the world, and for the maintenance of which the world has a right to hold us accountable; it is this: that while in the several governments of Europe the privileges of the people are enjoyed by grants from the government—by concessions, often wrung from the governments with the greatest difficulty and at an immense cost of life and treasure—in our happy country, the *power* of the government is a *grant* from the people. This is the essential difference between those governments and ours.

"I am willing to grant to those whose consciences are tender on the subject of slavery that in absolute governments, which do not proceed from the people, and which do not contain within themselves any provision for their change under the progressive improvement of the world, there may be, and at times there certainly is, a 'higher duty' than obedience. But I utterly deny, speaking in reference to the condition of man as established by God himself in the world, that in our country there is or can be any 'higher duty,' in conflict with the Constitution, than that of maintaining the Constitution; and this for the simple reason that the Constitution is a creation by the people and contains within itself a provision for its alteration and improvement. No government in the world ever has been or can be established on any higher principle than our own; and therefore it is a plain contradiction to say that its overthrow can be justified by an appeal to any principle whatever.

"Europeans of what are called the middle classes are everywhere full of curiosity and hope in respect to our country and its institutions; and the opinion is just now becoming universal, in spite of every effort to keep it down, that we are a prosperous and happy people, under a legitimate and permanent government. I maintain that, while the Constitution provides within itself the means of change, by which any supposed evils under it may be avoided, it is the 'highest duty' of every citizen desiring a change to resort only to those means, and if he cannot succeed he is bound to regard the voice of the country, expressed through the Constitution, as the voice of God."

"Washington, Nov. 6, 1850. Called yesterday and paid



my respects to the President and his wife and daughter. I had seen them all before, the President when he was a member of the House of Representatives, and his wife and daughter I travelled with the other day from Philadelphia. Mr. Fillmore looks remarkably well, and his manners are sufficiently cultivated, though he is rather too large a man, with heavy round shoulders, giving him an ox-like appearance. His dress, plain, indeed, was stiff and he seemed not used to it, especially his high stiff shirt-collar which looked as if cut out of a board. Madam is a large strong-featured woman. She and her daughter rose to receive me and continued standing till I desired them to be seated. This was not exactly conventional. The President spoke of my visit to Europe and of my service on the board of officers."

Then he goes on, reading, speculating, dreaming, comparing philosophical theories and earnestly endeavoring to fit them to human life and human responsibility, enjoying far more a conclusion that seems to let in light upon his pathway than a visit to the President's or a promise of promotion.

So here he stands, at fifty-two, waiting with more or less patience, from day to day, for General Scott to draft and present a certain "project"—an outline of rules to govern the relations of brevet and other rank in the army. The succeeding booklet (204 pages) runs from November 8, 1850, to May 15, 1851, and is largely a chronicle of personal and family occurrences, with intermittent philosophical speculations and free comments upon the conduct of the government in the middle of Fillmore's administration.

"Washington, D. C., Nov. 8, 1850. Dined at the President's yesterday, with the members of both the army and navy board to report on rank. Ample in everything. Went off very well. Dine with Secretary of War Conrad to-morrow.

"Washington, Nov. 24. General Scott stepped in yesterday and took me off to dinner.

"Nov. 27. Wednesday. Drawing near the close of our report in relation to Rank—shall close, perhaps, to-morrow. I claim to have indicated the proper *principle* for framing the law of brevet rank so as to avoid the misconstructions and controversies which have heretofore agitated the army.

"General Scott prepared a project for the consideration of



the Board, in which he included the very fault of the existing 61st Article of War, to wit: a grant of power and also a restriction, not enumerating all possible cases that might occur. I proposed to make first brevet rank valid and effective when exercised with other rank 'except under the following restrictions.' Then I proposed to specify all the restrictions, so that, when not restricted, brevet rank shall be valid. This was unanimously agreed to. Whether our project will pass into law remains to be seen. . . . Everybody seems in this matter to think first of himself.

"General Scott gave a large party last evening: invited me but I did not go; excused myself this morning at the meeting of the board. When the board adjourned the General invited me to take a family dinner with him to-day. This was kind, but I begged him to excuse me—that I did not feel well. The fact is I dislike parties so much that the thought of going to one is almost enough to make me sick.

"Nov. 28. Went to church to-day with General Scott and General Wool. General S. leaned on me going and coming."

## CHAPTER XLVIII

BOARD ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICIAL RANK. CREATION OF OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL. HITCHCOCK URGES PRE-EMINENT CLAIMS OF SCOTT. FOREBODING GREAT NATIONAL TROUBLES. BRIGADIER-GENERAL BY BREVET

THE board for the establishment of the relations of rank accomplished its work and promptly adjourned. General Hitchcock was then appointed to another board to consider and report on the expediency of creating the grade of Lieutenant-General in the army, as a compliment to General Scott. The board reported in favor of the project and adjourned. General Scott then requested General Hitchcock to suggest his wishes for further employment in the army, and, they being stated, he received orders to join his regiment in New Mexico in the spring. This left him with time upon his hands—a virtual leave of absence of some months—"till grass is on the prairies." He visits friends, communes with congenial students of philosophy, and resumes his speculations.

"Washington, Jan. 14, 1851. Arrived from Baltimore about 10.30 and called immediately upon General Scott. Well received and invited to dine to-day at 4. . . . Later: Have just come in from dinner."

More than five hundred pages in these closely packed diaries of 1850 and 1851 are taken up with philosophical arguments and speculations, and the diarist lies awake nights solving abstruse problems, rises before morning and lights a candle to record his method of demonstrating some proposition or copy some scholium in Spinoza's *Ethics* and obviously esteems ideas far more highly than things—or, rather, to him ideas are things. Thus absorbed in metaphysical monologue, he gives us few details of his important public acts and few particulars concerning the distinguished people

with whom he dines. Half a dozen times during as many years he chronicles here his wish to resign his commission so that he can devote more time to study, but still he listlessly retains his place in the army, and gets what satisfaction he can in the intervals of service by reading more books and dwelling with his "high imperious thoughts."

Our reasoner is obviously a monist: he believes there is but one Substance in the universe and this Substance he calls God. This is the very definition of pantheism—a doctrine to which he consistently adheres, through all the recondite propositions of Spinoza and all the syllogisms of logic.

"Washington, Feb. 1. Dined yesterday with Secretary of War C. M. Conrad of Louisiana. Many officers present, and members of military committees of Senate and House. Met old friends. Had a cordial meeting with Jeff. Davis, once a cadet under my orders at West Point, since Colonel of the Mississippi regiment at Buena Vista, and now a distinguished senator and chairman of the Military Committee. Mr. Conrad sat in the middle on one side of the table and placed Colonel Davis at his right end and Mr. Burt, the House chairman, at the other end. He placed Mr. Granger at his right and me at his left, General Greene directly opposite—the rest scattered. Dined at 5 P.M. Handsome lights and other ornamental things on the table. Meats, etc., brought in and handed round *à l'Europe*. After leaving table coffee handed round and we took leave. I came home and copied Spinoza till a quarter before midnight.

"Evening, Feb. 11, and I have completed the copy of the *Ethics*—upwards of 580 pages—commenced, I think, about the middle of last month. This is the second copy (translation) I have made, and I have not succeeded to my satisfaction. But I have a better comprehension of the work than I have yet had.

"Washington, Feb. 18. . . . A joint resolution was passed by the Senate a few days ago authorizing the President to fill by brevet the grade of Lieutenant-General. General Scott sent for me. I called and found him full of excitement—hope and anxiety. He asked me to dine with him that day. I did so and found him still flushed with expectation. He told me I must not leave Washington before the adjourn-



ment of Congress. I wrote and printed in the *Republic* (anonymously) a long article setting forth his high merits as a soldier."

The spirit of this generous tribute will be sufficiently indicated by the following extracts:

"The great modern German poet, perhaps the greatest poet since Shakespeare, has set it down as among the marks of a great man that he must have the genius to conceive clearly a distinct object, with the knowledge and ability to bring the means into action necessary to secure the accomplishment of the object. Let us take one point at a time, and, in view of this mark of a great man, let us see how General Scott has fulfilled the condition; and, if he has fulfilled the condition, let us see, at the same time, whether he has employed his ability in the service of his country.

"It may be seen, by the documents printed by order of Congress, that General Scott, before leaving the capital of his country for the seat of war, proposed a plan for ending the war with Mexico with honor to his country. Without having had the smallest agency himself in bringing on the war, and being of the party, so far as of any party, supposed to be opposed to the war, yet, finding the country engaged in the war, he came forward like a patriot, with a clear and distinct plan for ending it with honor; and not only made the conception of this plan in the city of Washington, but perfectly matured it, even to its minutest details, before leaving this city. Let any one examine the memorial addressed by the General to the War Department, exhibiting his plan, and then look at the history of the campaign itself, and he will be amazed at the directness and clearness in which the object is conceived and the completeness and minuteness of the means indicated for securing the success of the plan, with the prescience with which the actual result was foreseen.

"This greatness, so strikingly exhibited on a grand scale before the campaign was commenced, was no less shown in every operation and field of battle, from Vera Cruz to the Mexican capital. A most remarkable instance of it was exhibited at the battle of Cerro Gordo. So completely was the *modus operandi* of the battle, and its immediate consequences, set forth in the *Order* for the battle, directing the manner of accomplishing the object, that the *London Times* could not refrain from expressing its admiration and astonishment, pointing out the *Order* as in some sort a history of the events and consequences of the battle. . . .

"A single event in the city of Mexico will suffice to give the

very highest evidence of this. After the American army had been, during several months, in possession of the capital of Mexico, the municipal authorities of the city, in their official capacity, paid General Scott the extraordinary compliment of inviting him to a public entertainment, provided at great expense, in the most magnificent style, at a remarkable old ruin (a deserted Capuchin monastery called *La desierta*) situated in a romantic spot in the mountains, some fifteen or seventeen miles from the city, where the sentiments of the Mexicans, as delivered in their toasts and speeches, were filled with the most touching testimonials of respect and homage to a public enemy, whom they delighted to honor as a man.

“Where, in the annals of war, can such an instance be found, such a testimony to the justice, generosity, and humanity of an enemy at the very capital of the conquered country, and the witnesses the very functionaries of the civil government of that capital? And where is there an American whose heart does not throb with pride at the knowledge of this evidence of greatness and goodness united in his representative in command of his army in a foreign country, furnishing an example for admiration and emulation in all future time?”

“Feb. 19 [1851]. More negro troubles in Boston. . . . All these things look towards a rupture in our otherwise happy and prosperous country. We are, I think, to have great national troubles. Is it possible that no government is stable among men and that a monarchy is the most stable of all?”

“Washington, Feb. 23. The clothing board, over which I have presided, closed its proceedings yesterday and adjourned *sine die*.

“Feb. 24. I called on General Scott to say that I would leave Washington if my presence there was not required. He said he wished to see me in presence of the Secretary of War to talk about New Mexico, where things were in a bad state. I was to command there, he said, and he had sent in my name for a brevet (Brigadier-General) which would make my situation more comfortable. The brevet would be very important to me, but I fear it is too late in the session for the Senate to act on the brevet, even if disposed.

“March 4. General Scott tells me that my name has been sent to the Senate for a brevet of Brigadier—that the President has called an extra session of the Senate and it will

probably then act upon the army nominations. I wonder if I shall be so lucky? However, it is external to me, and my peace comes from within and has been daily, daily, daily perfecting itself for years and years.

“March 10, evening. I was mistaken about the fate of the nomination for a brevet. I am a *Brigadier-General*. However, I do not care much about it. It is late in life for me to be pleased with such external things. I was more pleased with my first appointment as a cadet in 1814.”



## CHAPTER XLIX

TWICE RECALLED EN ROUTE TO NEW MEXICO. COMMAND OF  
PACIFIC DIVISION. SCOTT REGRETS DEPARTURE OF CHAM-  
PION. TO CALIFORNIA BY CHAGRES AND PANAMA. COR-  
RUPT OFFICIAL CALLED TO ACCOUNT. VIGILANCE COMMITTEE  
AND APPEAL FROM GOVERNOR

ON March 12 the newly honored diarist left Washington for his command in New Mexico—a long and tedious journey, chiefly by canal boat and stage.

Arrived at St. Louis he received a fervent welcome at his old friend's where for years he had made his home. Since he went to Europe the little daughter of the household, who had entered strongly into his affections, had suddenly died, and he records that his emotions so overcame him that he had great difficulty in returning the family greetings. Although he had never married he was always powerfully attracted by women and children and he strongly attracted them in return. In his associations he always preferred women and children to men, and the preference was apparently not the weaker for being wholly platonic.

"St. Louis, April 1, 1851. April fools' day has brought me a change indeed. Instead of going to New Mexico, for which my preparations are almost complete, I am by telegraph from Washington, dated 28th March, ordered to New York City as superintendent of the general recruiting service. Here is a change! I must wait here a week, however, before returning.

"April 20. Not yet gone East. I heard some days since of the death of Colonel Brady of my regiment, and have waited for General Scott, who was reported at Cincinnati on his way West, thinking that the death might make a difference with my destination—for I shall now be promoted to be Colonel.

He has gone to New Orleans, so I now return East, obedient to present orders.

"New York, April 27. Here's a change! but it was not unexpected. Yesterday orders reached this city announcing my promotion to be Colonel of the 2d Infantry, and directing me to join my regiment—in California. Am getting ready for a start.

"Waked early this morning—about 3—and thought of my thoughts on life, as usual. More and more clearly I saw some meaning in certain expressions in Spinoza not before realized—as 'an eternal mode of thinking.' It was last winter that for the first time the force of the idea came upon me that an idea itself (as of a triangle or circle) is independent of us and is eternal. But the breakfast bell rings. These ideas constitute us. We are what we think. As truth and existence are me, so Knowledge is Being, so far as it extends, and a man is what he *knows*.

"Monday, 28th Apr., 5 P.M. On board steamer for Troy. Must go to Burlington once more and look upon the grave-stones of my father's family. Went to church twice yesterday. In the morning Rev. Mr. S. preached from Revelations, a sermon as dark as the Apocalypse; in the afternoon a jack-anapes preached on the resurrection, and assured us that we should know our friends hereafter—I thought 't was more than most of us do here. . . . Commissioner Trist, who made the Mexican treaty, called on me to-day.

"Burlington, Vt., April 29. . . . Most of those I knew are in the graveyard, where, last evening, I wandered for an hour reading the inscriptions commemorating the death of great numbers whose names were once so familiar to me and whose appearance my memory recalls as if I were looking at them. But there they are—or their bodies are—in repose—eternal repose. And once or twice it crossed my mind that perhaps 't is just as well to be there as to be living the feverish life of most of us, which, be the life what it may, is always 'rounded with a sleep.' It amazes me to think that people should look with terror at what is beyond the grave. That we should shrink from the pain which sometimes accompanies dying is natural enough, and that those who have friends should regret to part with them is equally

natural; but that any one should fear what is beyond the tomb is mere wide-awake madness and folly. It is plain to me that the body may be justly regarded as an accretion thrown around the spirit, as it were limiting it; that we are, as a Platonic philosopher expresses it, 'the less' with the body than without it. It is equally plain to me that all or nearly all our trials, troubles, and sorrows come out of the body and its manifold wants. It is just as plain to me that death is a release from all these sorrows, and that we then survive ourselves in our better part, the intellect, with which we not only know what are called eternal truths, but by that very capacity have the highest possible assurance of our immortality."

At Burlington General Hitchcock saw such old friends as were living, was appealed to as arbiter in their quarrels, and got away as soon as convenient, reaching Washington May 8th. In passing through Philadelphia he bought several philosophical works of the 17th century, including a Diogenes Laertius from the Greek, 1688, and also *Dodona's Grove* and the *Vocal Forest*, 1640. General Scott had not yet returned from the Southwest, but General Hitchcock met the Secretary of War in the halls of the War Department.

"Shook hands. He congratulated me on the change in my orders from New Mexico to California. Out of the frying-pan into the fire, thought I.

"Washington, May 13. General Scott has returned. I am to dine with him to-day. Have special written orders for California, where I am to have command of the Pacific Division and supersede General Persifer F. Smith, who desires to stay there.

"Washington, May 15. Am ready for California. Had my last talk with Secretary of War and General Scott to-day. The General shew me a private letter from General Smith in which he speaks of a distinct plan of the governor and Legislature of California to call out the militia, ostensibly for the defence of the State against the Indians, and compel this government to pay the privates \$5 a day each and the officers in proportion. To carry out this project, the Indians are to be forced into war, and the pretence is that the United States troops are worthless for the defence of the country.



I foresee that I am to be placed in a delicate position, and that in California efforts will be made at first to use me, and, failing that, to abuse and destroy me. I shall hold to the right.

"I am cautioned also, both by the Secretary and General Scott, that several of the army officers and, it is feared, disbursing agents, are engaged in speculations inconsistent with their public duties. This, too, will be a delicate matter to handle, but I shall go strong in my purposes to do what is proper under all circumstances.

"On taking leave of the General, I told him that I had long foreseen that he would be the Whig candidate for the next Presidency, to which he assented, as if he thought so. I added that, in that event, every sort of lie would be uttered against him and his Mexican campaign; that I had hoped to have it in my power to meet such statements as might be intended to injure him—that I was well armed with facts, and felt able to do it. He admitted all and even intimated that he would not be sorry if I was nearer than California, but my promotion to be Colonel of the 2d Infantry, etc., etc. He said that in June last he himself wrote the title-page of his *Memoirs*, the second part to be commenced first and to embrace the Mexican War, of which he had written the first chapter when the death of President Taylor hurried him to Washington and he had since been too busy. He suggested my writing sketches and sending them to his son-in-law, Colonel Scott. I said that on any given point, when called out, I should be perfectly at home and defied any one to beat me off. He said 'Yes,' as if he thought so; and I suppose he does think so.

"New York, May 23d. I have paid \$330 for a passage to San Francisco by Chagres and Panama. Expenses over the Isthmus are not included, so that the journey will probably cost \$400 or over. . . . I hear carriages rolling through Broadway, perhaps for the last time in my life, for something whispers me that I shall never return. It is as certain as anything can possibly be that to whatever begins to be, a termination must come. And assuredly that event is a perfect balance to the birth of anything. Why is not this fact a ground of absolute indifference?—such indifference as was

implied by the ancient philosopher who, when he remarked that death is the same as life and was asked why then he did not die, replied, 'Because life is the same as death.' . . . Great God! what a paradise this world might be if all things were favorable to a perfect development of man!

"Steamer *Crescent City*. Going down the harbor; off almost to a minute, and what a scene the parting was! What crowds, what anxious and tearful faces, aboard and ashore. Women bursting into floods of tears—waving of handkerchiefs. I could not resist the feeling of sympathy."

The run down the Atlantic coast and through the Caribbean Sea was pleasant and rapid, but life on board the ship was by no means uneventful. Some hundreds of the kind of people who went to El Dorado that year crowded together between decks would be sure to excite each other's interest more or less, and a curious assortment of scandals broke out among the passengers before they got half way to the Isthmus. General Hitchcock had bought in New York a large collection of classic and antique books, so that time did not hang heavy on his hands, and he was in no need of the popular diversions which seem to have characterized the voyage.

All went tolerably well till they reached Chagres and changed to another steamer to cross the Isthmus. The captain, with a view to carrying as many as possible, promised that he would go with his steamboat up to Gorgona if there was water enough in the river. As they proceeded the passengers by inquiry ascertained that there was water enough; but the Captain, "wishing to go back for another load, whom he would delude in the same way," stopped the steamboat and announced his determination to send them forward fourteen miles in rowboats, making it necessary for the women and children to be out all night. Passengers violently protested. An old lady remonstrated with him, but he profanely insulted her. General Hitchcock narrates the sequel:

"I stepped between the captain and the lady. He saw his error and offered to apologize to the lady under my care, he said. I told him that the lady was not under my care, except as every lady is entitled to the protection of every gentleman. I then told him that I was highly dissatisfied with his conduct. He attempted to interrupt me with explana-



tions, but I assumed a peremptory tone and demeanor, my voice rising to a high pitch, and with concentrated energy I said, 'We know that you can go to Gorgona, but we believe you have determined to sacrifice our comfort and that of these ladies and children for purposes of sordid gain.' Combining passion with perfect self-composure, I added, 'We will publish you. Depend on it, I will do you all the injury I can.' "

The result of this lecture in the presence of hundreds of excited passengers crowding around, was that the captain retracted, apologized, and went up to Gorgona that night. The passengers volubly thanked their intercessor, to his great embarrassment, and he adds:

"My points were fully carried, and every passenger on board, I verily believe, thinks I am fully fit to be a brigadier-general!"

In making the difficult journey from Gorgona across to Panama on the Pacific the diarist is evidently much impressed with the horrible condition of the almost impassable roads and the luxuriance of the tropical vegetation differing from the Mexican species. Had to wait here a few days, and "finally" as the diarist observes, reached San Francisco on the *Northerner* July 7th—twenty days from Panama. He philosophizes that twenty days are "better than 140 days which a sailing vessel recently took for the same voyage." Two fires had swept over the city within the last two months, destroying \$13,000,000 worth of property, and the vigilance committee had been organized to deal with important offenders, incendiaries, etc. "The principal part of the city is in ruins."

"Benicia,<sup>1</sup> Cal., July 9, 1851. Arrived yesterday. Major Sewell had prepared to receive me with a salute—which I dispensed with. This is the head-quarters of the division, including Oregon and California. I assumed command yesterday.

"Benicia, July 19. I have broken ground against reputed corruption, and have written a letter to Col. ———, a commissioner in the Indian Department to treat with Indians in

<sup>1</sup> Benicia is thirty miles from San Francisco, on the northeast extremity of the bay.



this country, telling him of the rumor of his misconduct and declining to furnish him an escort to go among the Indians until he makes satisfactory explanation. Instead of explaining the rumors or denying their truth, he *promises* to explain. We shall see. To cope with corruption in this country requires both firmness and honesty and may need support from Washington. I have succeeded heretofore in these conflicts and ought not to fail now.

"Benicia, Aug. 3 (Sunday). I must send for my books, now at Dr. Beaumont's in St. Louis—over 2000 volumes, I think perhaps 2500. I shall be in danger of frittering away my time without them, and if I had them I could look into some matters more closely than I ever have. I must send for them, to be forwarded by sea around Cape Horn, and I may get them next March or April. . . . As usual when I have moments of leisure, my mind runs upon the problems of life—of Nature, the One, the Infinite, and how the Many may consist with or come out of the One—what Wordsworth describes as

‘the burden and the mystery  
Of all this unintelligible world.’

"The spirit which doubts the ultimately beneficial tendency of inquiry, which thinks that morality and religion will not bear the broadest daylight our intellects can throw on them, though it may clothe itself in robes of sanctity and use pious phrases, is the worst form of atheism; while he who believes, whatever else he may deny, that the true and the good are synonomous, bears in his soul the essential elements of religion."

During these weary weeks of waiting—not indeed for his books, for they cannot reach him in six months, but for the assembly of facts concerning the alleged corruption of government agents on which he must act—he betakes himself vigorously to his diary, criticising such books as he can get, copying favorite passages, recording his feelings and his thoughts concerning the known, but especially the unknown, and arguing with himself concerning the "pono" of various metaphysicians and philosophers. He even makes abstracts of entire books of whose contents, in whole or in part, he approves.

This number of his diary, two hundred and thirty-four neatly and compactly written pages, is mostly a record of his journey to California, and it ends with a chronicle of the reflection that he is misunderstood by his friends.

"Ocean steamer *Columbia*, Aug. 20, 1851, mid-day, on my way to Oregon. Left San Francisco an hour ago. This morning at five o'clock I heard an alarm bell ring. Thinking the hotel afire I looked out and asked a man what the matter was. 'Vigilance Committee,' he said, 'don't you see them going down street?' I then fancied I saw through the fog a procession going toward the wharf where they hung Stewart a few weeks ago. Knowing that they had captured two of his accomplices I supposed they were to be hung, though it seemed an odd hour.

" 'I will go and see what is going on,' said I.

" 'You 'd better not,' said the man; 'there may be some shooting.'

"I drew on some clothes and started down the street and found a few people collected in front of the house occupied by the Vigilance Committee. I considered myself a mere spectator, and only walked about listening to whatever I might hear. I soon learned that the police, under the lead of the Governor, had rescued the two men from the guard of the Vigilance Committee, and that the committee inside were debating what to do. Some were in favor of tearing down the jail and hanging the two men at noon as previously voted. Two or three came out and made inflammatory speeches to the crowd, denouncing the authorities for 'stealing' the prisoners at night, and appealing to the increasing multitude to defend the Vigilance Committee. Some huzzas were obtained, but the people did not seem enthusiastic. Something was said about shedding 'the last drop of blood,' as usual on such occasions. At length I got tired of standing and returned to the hotel and dressed. I threw myself on the bed, but in a short time I was hunted up by a man with an official note from Governor McDougall, asking for 200 rifles or muskets 'for the defence of the majesty of law,' explaining that they were wanted to defend the county jail.

"I knew very well that the two rogues deserved any fate that justly incensed people might inflict, and did not like the



appeal; but I thought I was called on, under the circumstances, not to look behind the Governor's note, and I gave the order on the arsenal for the arms. I got breakfast and came on board where, about 11 o'clock, I was glad to hear that the Vigilance Committee had decided not to adopt violent measures; and, with this information, we put to sea.

"Portland, Oregon, Aug. 15. Arrived last evening. . . . The town is new, only three or four years old, hastily built up of timber stuff, many of the buildings being brought by sea from New York.<sup>1</sup> I met this morning a young lady who was one of our passengers from the East, and she bewailed the lack of society here, there being only one other young lady in town besides herself. . . . Astoria contains about a dozen small wood tenements clustered on the banks of the stream in the edge of a piece of (fir) woods.

"Portland, Aug. 25. I must establish a post in Rogue River Valley. I can find nobody who has been over the country from Fort Oxford to the East; I must therefore send out an exploring expedition. This is one of the official results of my coming here: one of the unofficial results is that I paid seventy-five cents to have my hair cut."

While waiting here for orders to be carried out he has continual recourse to Spinoza, and finds great comfort therein. He obtains a fragment of what he seeks, and then he quotes Lucretius:

"Who says that nothing can be known, o'erthrows  
His own opinion, for he nothing knows,  
So knows not that. What need of long dispute?  
These maxims kill themselves—themselves confute."

But he attacks the *Ethics* again as if he had never seen the book before or heard of Spinoza, and takes consolation in the reflection: "He whose aim is the truth alone will be rewarded, if but with the knowledge that it is unattainable—which yet it cannot be if so be he can know it to be unattainable. . . . With Spinoza the postulates appear to be

<sup>1</sup> Five years before, Daniel Webster had objected to giving Oregon a territorial government, partly on the ground that it was "so far off that a delegate to Congress could not reach Washington till a year after the expiration of his term."



in his definitions, which seem to be so many assumptions: these, however, he afterwards brings successively out amidst his demonstrations. I could wish to leave this subject, but it seems as if I could no more live without it than I could sustain my body without food."

There follow twenty-seven closely written pages of religious argumentation. Then the diarist visits the upper half of Oregon Territory, examines its productiveness, comments on its laws, and speculates concerning its future. At Vancouver (Aug. 29th) he is received with a double salute, one from the post and one from the Hudson Bay Company—"had no time to stop it." Inspects the barracks and stores of ammunition. Visits, during the next three weeks, remote portions of Oregon Territory.

"Saw some emigrants, just arrived. Four months coming from Lexington, Ky. A party of about a dozen men with wives and children, two children born on the way and doing well—one three and the other four weeks old. Mothers proud of the feat. The party stopped only an hour for one of them and but a short time for the other. Indians gave them no trouble, but other parties recently have had trouble. One of them stole an Indian horse and was followed and had a woman and child killed. This, of course, will be reported as an Indian outrage. Back to the Cascades from the Dalles on Monday, Sept. 8, 1851, 12 M.; back to Vancouver, and tarried there three weeks before returning southward."

## CHAPTER L

NEWS OF FILIBUSTER IN CUBA. DEPRECATES ANNEXATION OF THE ISLAND. A COMMANDER WITHOUT TROOPS. CORRUPT OFFICERS REPRIMANDED. INDIAN OUTRAGES

AT this point the diarist records, "I may resign at any moment," adding that he has never recovered the good health which he lost in Mexico, and doubtless feeling, as he has always felt, some repugnance for the drudgery of his profession and an ever increasing desire to devote the remainder of his life to serious study. But he does not carry out his thought, returning, instead, to his military head-quarters at Benicia—and to the scholiums of Spinoza, to Plotinus and Iamblicus. "I can not," he says "get rid of the idea that Plato is tedious,—that the gist of what he has to say could have been put into one eighth of the space he uses—into one volume instead of five."

"Benicia, Cal., Oct. 4, 1851. News comes that General Lopez<sup>1</sup> has been hung at Havana by the Spanish governor—result of his second expedition against Cuba. Newspapers represent that great excitement prevails in the States, and that large numbers are going and preparing to go to Cuba to revolutionize it. The motive of most of them must be to share in an adventurous life and realize results in Cuba, the leaders promising large estates in the William of Normandy style. If this movement could benefit the Union, as such, I should have little objection to it, but suppose Cuba revolutionized and applying for admission into our Union, what then? The negro question would come up, and a separation of the Union would be the almost inevitable consequence. And this I should regard as the greatest calamity possible,

<sup>1</sup> Narciso Lopez was executed by garrote, Sept. 1st.

almost, to the civilized world. It would tend to throw back progress in Europe indefinitely."

At Benicia, Oct. 7th, General Hitchcock received the news of the death of his only brother, Samuel, who died of consumption on Aug. 1st at sea, while returning from Europe where he had lived many years. Mr. Samuel Hitchcock was on his way from Holland to California to join his brother. For him he had translated several important works from the Latin and other languages, and in their views of the mysteries of life, the here and hereafter, the whence and whither, they were closely in sympathy. The survivor thus soliloquizes:

"He is lost to me, my dear and affectionate brother. And I am now the sole survivor of my father's family of five boys and three girls. Sam joined me on a portion of my tour through Europe.

"Benicia, Oct. 12. In the intervals of service I am engaged in copying my translation of Spinoza's *Improvement of the Understanding* and the *Letters*. The eastern mail arrives once in fifteen days.

"Oct. 25. Last Monday sent to Fort Oxford three companies of dragoons under Lieut.-Col. Silas Casey, to operate against some hostile Indians, who lately murdered five Americans. . . . For some days I have been reading Plato's *Republic*.

"Sonoma, Dec. 4, evening. Serious matters on hand. Day before yesterday rumors reached here of an outbreak of Indians in the southern part of this State reaching from San Diego clear to the Gila. To-day comes the first official notice. Lieutenant Murray reports from the Gila an attempt of Indians to get possession of the post. Lieutenant Sweeney was there with only ten men and a few citizens connected with a ferry. Lieutenant Murray arrived in haste from San Diego and ordered the Indians away. They refused to go till he levelled a howitzer at them. They then cut away the ferry and hung around in a hostile attitude. Near Los Angeles, too, a settler and an Indian or two have been killed.

"This looks serious. I am a commanding general without troops!—my adjutant-general in arrest, no aide de camp, and this evening's mail brings me a letter from the U. S. Quartermaster General, Jesup, complaining of the officers of his depart-



ment in this division and saying that he may be obliged to refuse payment of their drafts and cease to send further funds here! This is a pretty state of things!—and it is in no way under my control, except that I might appoint some inexperienced officer my a. d. c. In this whole division there are only about 350 men scattered at different posts from Mexico to Puget Sound! Leaving guards at posts, I could not assemble for this emergency over 150 or 200 men, and should be utterly without means for an expedition into the country. Yet I have repeatedly asked for additional troops.

“Sunday, Dec. 7. On board *Seabird* returning to Benicia. Gave my testimony before court-martial yesterday; rode horse to Benicia (30 miles) and gave orders for two companies 2d Infantry to be ready to embark at 10 A.M.; went to San Francisco in the evening and made arrangements for transport of troops to San Diego; signed the contract; saw Governor McDougall and explained to him my measures in full and expressly left him to act independently with his militia, etc. Read the *North British Review* after going to bed. The people of San Diego seem very much alarmed, but Major S. P. Heintzelman, in command there, does not justify it.

“Dec. 21. Feel like a fish out of water, having read all I have to read, and put military affairs in motion. Have three government vessels afloat with troops and supplies. Major Heintzelman reports his departure from San Diego with seventy or eighty men against some hostiles sixty or eighty miles distant. . . . What do writers mean by talking about the primitive conditions of life and ‘primitive times,’ when close by me here are natives who go naked throughout the year, winter and summer, the men not wearing moccasins or even a breech cloth, and the women using only the fig leaf or its substitute.

“Benicia, Sunday, Dec. 21, 1851. Have been to church to-day . . . Preachers with a tendency to liberality are much to be pitied. They are in a false position—‘bound over’ to preach certain traditions, which the rising knowledge of the day has undermined, while this undermining is partly known and partly suspected and feared. . . . I deny that a belief in the immortality of the soul is essential to religion. Whether the soul is immortal or not is a question

of fact—that is, of philosophy—and a man may believe it or not and yet be a very sincere, earnest, upright man, a pious and religious man. I deny that Christianity affords us evidence of this immortality beyond what we have independently of it.”

The diarist here returns with avidity to subjective philosophy, and the next twenty-eight pages of his diary are filled with earnest speculations concerning the unfathomable mysteries of life; with the conclusions of an Oriental monarch, that mind and substance are one, that God and Nature are one, that free-will and necessity are one, that time and eternity are one; with quotations, demonstrations, syllogisms; with confirmatory extracts. He rehearses the elements of “universal principles,” and adds: “it is a curious feeling to know that though immediately around me I find no response to these doctrines, yet I could have had an intelligible conversation about them with Spinoza, Lord Bacon, Leibnitz, Plato, Zeno and others in distant ages and countries, and this is some relief from the otherwise solitude in which I find myself.”

And so he goes on recording his meditations on this New Year's Day—many of his entries reverting to his own life and experience. Again and again he refers to the great Unknown, which sometimes he calls God, sometimes the Absolute.

“The existence of God is an eternal truth, but the notions of him which men draw from Nature are infinitely various, and so of course cannot all be true. Hence when men talk of God's goodness, mercy, anger, jealousy, and the like, they are not truly talking of God but only of certain experiences in Nature which they generalize or universalize, but which yet do not express the nature of God, any more than to say that he is hard or soft, bitter or sweet. For Nature and God are one.”

The average reader wonders how a man, engaged in the active business of the world, could show such devotion to ideas and give so much time to philosophy; and the philosopher himself anticipates the question on this New Year's Day:

“If, now, I were asked of what use these speculative principles are, I might reply that to him who could ask such



a question they perhaps are of no use whatever, as they could not make any part of his life; but, to those who conceive them as among the realities of existence and as being, indeed, among the only things absolutely true, they have an importance immeasurably beyond all the fleeting things of the world, and enable us, in fact, to put a right value even on these. . . . I refer to these philosophical principles often; but do not church members repeat their creed once or twice every week? And the repetition of the creed is merely a matter of form; but with me, when I note anything of God, of Substance, of Mode, of Eternity, I am really thinking of these things.

“As the Bible was written by many men in different ages, there is not that unity in it that there is in the Koran, which was written by one man; and, for this very reason, the Bible will outlive the Koran, for the latter is adapted to but one stage of the human mind, while the Bible is adapted to many and diverse stages.”

It was while dreaming and meditating at Benicia, and incidentally governing the California-Oregon Military Division and attending to its multitudinous requirements, that General Hitchcock got hold of a remarkable booklet, *The Story of Reynard the Fox*. This allegory or fable he read as containing a pretty complete outline of the esoteric method by which the writers of the Middle Ages concealed the true meaning of their assaults on the Church. It impressed him much, and seemed to him a confirmation of the Rossetti theory of the metaphoric jargon under which Dante masked his religious opinions.

In January General Hitchcock discovered certain transactions bearing close resemblance to speculations upon the government,—the covert use of public funds for the promotion of private interests. He sharply reprimanded the officers involved and called on them for an immediate explanation. About this time, too, a severe illness came upon him, which made him think, quite without alarm and with very little anxiety, that the end of his life was near.

“I see returning signs of the old complaint. . . . Very well; I sometimes think I have seen the limit of what I can see in this world, as it is called,—for I believe in but



one world and I am now in eternity and am not 'going into' it. . . . A skeptic is one who says that everything that occurs does actually occur within and not outside of Nature, but he by no means pretends to account for everything. Absolutely speaking, nothing can be accounted for, because the true and absolute origin of things remains inscrutable."

He has bought and borrowed a few books—among them Aristotle's *Ethics*, which he studiously compares with Plato's and Spinoza's, not to its advantage. He spends all of Washington's birthday in recording his impressions. These end as follows:

"This mode of question and answer seems wonderfully silly and Plato is full of it. Of sixty pages that I have read, I am sure that six would contain the substance.

"Later: Must give it up. I cannot read this dry work upon the nothingness of pleasure and pain. 'There never yet was philosopher who could endure the toothache patiently.'

"Benicia, Feb. 26. Five hundred recruits arrived to-day *via* Panama."

As matters were in a threatening if not perilous condition on two of the frontiers of California, the commanding general must have done something with his reinforcements, but he did it quietly and without specific mention. He probably looked up from his Goethe, Iamblicus, and Ardesius, his Hegel and Xenophon, long enough to send the soldiers where they were needed, with requisite orders for their employment, and then forthwith fell to study again. Indeed, his wide and assiduous reading was already bearing fruit, for he had begun systematically to write for publication in book form—of which more anon.

"San Francisco, Apr. 18, 1852. My books have arrived—30 boxes in all—cost of carriage, \$200. Am waiting to get them. . . . Have driven out to the Presidio, and listened with delight to the surf breaking on the rocks below,—relief from the everlasting talk about 'property,' 'water lots,' etc. Great God! What an affliction, to hear this eternal chatter about this man and that who has made so much money in such a time! The place is made odious to me by this commonplace talk about property, property, property! Such external matters ought to be disposed of in a short time and

laid aside. I would as soon listen to the clatter of a mill. I thought of Faust. Death! That all my usual thoughts should be broken in upon thus!

"Benicia, Apr. 28th. Three companies of troops have arrived from San Diego, where they have been 'operating' for several months. I put Major Heintzelman in command there when I came and he has put an end to a combination of hostile tribes and restored peace to that part of the State. My official books and papers in the office keep a record of these things."

During April and May he revels and luxuriates among his books once more—comments less, perhaps, and reads more. Makes or renews acquaintance with Tiberghien, Vico, Sallust, Stallo, Oken, Krause, Tennemann, Porphyry.

"Benicia, June 17. My last evening at this place. My books have gone ahead to San Francisco. In transferring head-quarters thither I have not consulted personal comfort or economy; but I have moved because it is the centre of the country. I am thinking seriously of resigning.

"San Francisco, July 9. Figured in the Fourth of July procession (5th) by invitation of city authorities—a couple of elegant carriages furnished for myself and staff. Heard a tame and somewhat objectionable oration containing a tirade against the Chinese and a defence of Vigilance Committee. Private dinner. Escaped without drinking even a glass of wine.

"San Francisco, July 31. I called to see the Methodist minister to-day. Found there a man dressed like a gentleman, who would be doubtless offended to be told he was none, who had the audacity to say that Providence designed the extermination of the Indians and that it would be a good thing to introduce the small-pox among them! He soon found himself alone in that savage sentiment, but it is the opinion of most white people living in the interior of the country.

"One advantage I get is that my speculations diminish the force of the temporary, and, as this is in its nature transitory, I am less affected by its loss and not in a fever in pursuing it. Standing, as it were, upon eternal ideas, the shows of things do not so much perplex me."



Reports of "Indian outbreaks" and "outrages by the savages" broke in upon the diarist's meditation. To meet contingencies threatened at the head waters of the San Joachim he was compelled to send (Aug. 5th) three companies of soldiers and two howitzers with precise instructions. Of the causes at work, he writes:

"The wrong came, as usual, from white men. The Indian commissioner last year made treaties with these Indians, and assigned them reservations of land as their own. The whites have not respected the proceedings of the commissioner, but have occupied the reservation to a considerable extent and established a ferry within the lands assigned to the Indians. To this the Indians seem to have objected, and one of them told the ferryman that he was on their land and he would have to go away, because his boat and apparatus stopped the salmon from ascending the river. This, it is said, was considered a hostile threat, and a party of whites was raised to go among the Indians and demand an explanation. As what had been said to the ferryman was said by only one or two and was not advised by the tribe, the latter was taken entirely by surprise by this armed party, and, knowing nothing of its object and becoming alarmed, some it is said were seen picking up their bows, and this was considered a sign of hostile intent and they were fired on and fifteen or twenty were killed! Some of the Indians belonging to the tribe were, at the moment their friends were fired on, at work on a white man's farm some miles distant, without the smallest suspicion of existing causes of hostility.

"Affairs thereupon assumed a threatening aspect, and a great council has been appointed for Aug. 15th, at which all the surrounding tribes will assemble on King's River, to discuss the question of going to war with the whites. It is to overawe this council that I have sent the troops to Fort Miller. It is a hard case for the troops to know the whites are in the wrong, and yet be compelled to *punish* the Indians if they attempt to defend themselves."



## CHAPTER LI

REFLECTIONS ON DEFEAT OF SCOTT. WILLIAM WALKER, FILIBUSTER. EXPEDITION AGAINST SONORA. HITCHCOCK SEIZES BRIG "ARROW." CONSPIRACY OF OFFICIALS. HITCHCOCK FRUSTRATES PLANS AND CAUSES FAILURE OF FILIBUSTERS. READY TO BE RELIEVED

THE most of this summer of 1852 seems to be given by General Hitchcock to reading, criticism, and contemplation, at least as far as the diary is a guide. His management of the military division is outlined in his official reports and doubtless detailed in his official records, but the diary is devoted chiefly to considerations of the finite and infinite, of the one and many, of substance and modes, of the changeable and the permanent, of the transient and the eternal.

During this year, news of the death of Clay and Webster reached San Francisco, and there were public processions in their honor. Of Webster the diarist says:

"When he commented on foreign tyrannies, like that of Nicholas, he went back to first principles; but in discussing matters nearer home, like domestic slavery, he held it more important to sustain our institutions as a whole, including slavery, than, by siding with the abolitionists, endanger the peace of the country. If, some two years since, Webster had sided with the abolitionists, it might have decided the point and driven the Southerners into a declaration of 'separation,' and without benefiting the slaves, have brought about a destructive civil war."

Another piece of news came (in December) that shocked General Hitchcock: the defeat of his old commander, General Scott, for the presidency, by General Pierce, one of Scott's subordinates.

The diarist soliloquizes:

“In this defeat, I presume General Scott has felt a deeper depression than he has ever before experienced in all his life. I would not undergo his feelings of disappointment at this defeat for all the honors of the world put together and all the wealth of the world added.”

“San Francisco, Dec. 6. At breakfast this morning, having thought much of resigning from the army, it crossed my mind to seem to myself to have resigned; and there I sat, a plain citizen, without a dependence upon anybody or thing except great Nature. I have often tried to realize how I should feel as a private man. Certainly no one can value the externals of a position less than I do. I am so far from priding myself upon place that to get rid of the feeling of it is one of the objects I hope to accomplish by resigning. How many thousands of my fellow-men look with envy upon my power and privileges,—as if I had no sense of my higher obligations to duty or Nature!”

During these months of fall and winter the diarist constantly records his mental conceptions. Almost every day he philosophizes, inquires, soliloquizes, discusses with himself the contents of the books he is reading. From Plato and Cicero's *Laws* he makes elaborate quotations. The most of this philosophizing is necessarily omitted from this compilation. On Feb. 3, 1853, General Hitchcock sold to San Francisco the most of the library which he had ordered from New York at such heavy expense and in which he had taken such high satisfaction. It became the basis of the present Mercantile Library Association of that city and enriched it with a large number of works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which could not have been duplicated in America.

“The most of them have performed their office as far as I am concerned. They are exceedingly valuable. There is, properly speaking, no ‘light reading’ in the modern sense, such as common novels, but generally books requiring thought and reflection in the reader. One of the inducements I have had to this step has been a desire to avoid the chance of becoming what is called a bookworm. As far back as 1825, at West Point, I remember resolutely setting my face against reading books without an express object. I had a great horror of a certain species of idle dissipation—taking up a

book merely as a means of passing the time. I have read books only because I wished to know something. Pleasure, as such, has never been my object. The end, thus far, has been to put me into the most friendly relations with Plato, and I find that the more I know of him, the less I care to know about other writers. I have yet a great deal to learn in Plato. Still I have never thought of becoming a learned or a literary man."<sup>1</sup>

"Feb. 8, 1853. Ship *John Gilpin* has arrived. Brings me some more books. Also brings decision of the Secretary of War which will put a stop to holding up my pay in treasury. He says I am on duty as a Brigadier-General and orders me to be paid accordingly. He says:

I do not hesitate to say that General Hitchcock's command, embracing as it does an entire division, including two military departments, both the scenes of important military operations with the Indian tribes, and a great number of posts, many of them established by himself, is and has always been fully equal to that of a brigadier if not of a major-general, independently of the number of troops under his command. For this reason I have always considered that he was on duty according to his brevet rank, and supposed that he had been expressly assigned to duty according to that rank. He will be paid accordingly.

C. M. CONRAD,  
Secy. of War."

During the summer of 1853, General Hitchcock was immersed in philosophy. In the next volume of his diaries consisting of 224 compactly written pages, there is no entry concerning his military life. It is wholly a record of his intellectual and spiritual life. He tries to identify the great truths in Hindoo literature—the character of Vishnu and Siva, and the relative value of the Puranas and Tantras. He renews his endeavor to define God, eternity, substance, the absolute, even resorting to triangles, circles, lines infinitely projected and other geometric signs in efforts to illustrate and demonstrate the scholiums. He considers the Om of the Hindoo seer and the Nirvana of the devotee.

<sup>1</sup> A few years later he was writing and giving to the world books on the recondite themes he had studied.



"God is all that he does, and all that he is."

"Aristotle is a natural philosopher: Plato is a divine philosopher. There is only a fanciful resemblance between them. The warmest admirer of Aristotle may have but a slender comprehension of Plato; while I think the Platonist circumscribes the Aristotelian, even when he has not studied Aristotle in detail, as the greater contains the less."

"San Francisco, Oct. 9. Much as usual, when I have action in my life my notes cease.

"About the middle of last month, I received an intimation that an expedition was on foot in this city to overthrow the Mexican authority in the state of Sonora, adjoining California on the south, and there to set up a revolutionary government. My orders from President Fillmore were peremptory to prevent any such enterprise from being carried out, by using my military force to the utmost of my power.

"On Sept. 22d, I called the collector's attention to the rumor and requested him to cause a special watch to be had upon the vessels in the harbor preparing for sea. We had several conferences. On the 30th the collector addressed me a note pointing out the brig *Arrow* as being fitted up for a large number of passengers and as having arms on board. His men had seen suspicious parcels and packages apparently stowed away as if to hide them under the after cabin.

"I put the case before the U. S. district attorney, whom my instructions required me to consult in case of doubt. He advised instant seizure, and I accordingly ordered Capt. E. D. Keyes, with a party of soldiers from the Presidio, to seize the vessel and deliver her to the U. S. marshal. This was done at 10 P.M. that day.

"Next day a writ of replevin was taken out, one William Walker claiming the right of possession of both vessel and cargo. The sheriff of the county thereupon demanded the vessel of the marshal, who, taking legal advice, answered that he had not possession and referred the sheriff to me. The marshal abandoned the vessel, but a sergeant on guard had wit enough to refer the sheriff to me. We had an interview.

"He wished to execute his orders and take the vessel by a posse if necessary. I shew him my orders from the Presi-

dent, referred him to the law, and advised him to think well of the matter, assuring him that I would hold the vessel against the State's authority. He finally concluded to do nothing that evening, and said his term of office expired that day.

"Next day (Sunday) there was much going to and fro, but I saw neither the old nor the new sheriff.

"During Monday night Major Andrews, then in charge on the vessel, was privately informed that an attempt to take her out of his hands would be made on Tuesday morning by the men whom Walker had engaged for his expedition, whereupon he hauled her from the wharf and anchored her out in the stream.

"On that evening the collector came to my quarters and exhibited real or affected alarm about the state of things. He said he had suffered the greatest anxiety, etc., etc., and ended by advising me to give orders to my guard that, in case of attack, the vessel should be surrendered without opposition. I presume the secret managers of the expedition had created this alarm in the mind of the collector as far as it was real. I had seen him and U. S. Senator Gwin together, and had reason to suspect Gwin's fidelity to the government.

"Seeing that my acquiescence in the collector's proposal would insure the attack, I peremptorily and with some show of real indignation refused assent.

"I then went to the U. S. district attorney and found that he, too, as I believed, had been corrupted, probably by Senator Gwin. He also urged, with great affected alarm, that I should open the way for the seizure of the vessel by giving them to understand that no opposition would be made on my part. I was even more positive in my refusal to the district attorney than I had been to the collector. He intimated that he had protected me from the effects of public opinion for having seized the vessel, whereupon I struck my fist down, saying 'Damn public opinion!' adding that I would under no circumstances surrender the vessel, and that if any body of men undertook to get possession of her it would be at their peril.

"I had, in fact, lost all confidence in the officers of the United States, who, I believed, had been let into the secret



of the expedition after the arrest of the vessel. 'T is certain that their conduct was suddenly entirely changed. Nothing was done that night, and the next day I had the vessel libelled for a violation of the law of 1818.<sup>1</sup>

"I have been sued for \$30,000 damages, and also required to answer for contempt of the State court, but shall have no great difficulty in justifying myself. Meantime the papers have all been noticing the event. Two of them, evidently in the interest of the expedition, are virulently abusing me for interfering with it. The *Alta* this morning has a handsome notice defending me.

"Another thing: A Mr. Crabb,<sup>2</sup> a member of the Legislature, has started an independent move on Sonora, and has asked a passport from me. I have declined to give it. Then Senator Gwin himself called and urged me to give the passport or 'safe conduct' to 'the Hon. Mr. Crabb,' saying 'he could be useful to our government by dissipating prejudices!' They are either fools or they think I am one. I kept my temper and declined to comply. A pretty thing, indeed, that I should be dragooned into giving such a protection to a leading man of a hostile force against Sonora!—and at the solicitation of a senator of the United States! But they have not succeeded. As the matter now stands I am almost alone in this community in opposing the expedition.

"San Francisco, Oct. 16. I have written to-day to General Scott giving him some account of the seizure of the brig *Arrow* and my reasons for it, and I have expressed to him the opinion<sup>3</sup> that the expedition to capture Sonora is counte-

<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco *Times* of October 3d said: "The brig *Arrow* has on board accommodations for 150 or 200; that she has been recently provided; that she has on board arms and ammunition, probably for such expedition as it will be proved has recently been set on foot in this State against the peace of Sonora in Mexico; that the right of possession of both vessel and cargo is claimed by William Walker; that a so-called 'government of Sonora' has been formed here, and that William Walker has acted as 'governor' and that another person has signed as Secretary of State, and that an armed body of men has been engaged to descend upon Sonora."

<sup>2</sup> This Mr. Crabb was subsequently killed in a filibustering expedition to capture Sonora.

<sup>3</sup> This "opinion" of Gwin was quite correct. He served out his term in the Senate, but he kept his eye on Sonora where Crabb found his death and in 1863, matured a plan for colonizing Sonora with southerners. Louis Napoleon and Maximilian approved of the project and made Gwin "Duke



nanced by most of the leading politicians here, including the two Senators in Congress—Gwin and Weller. Weller has in a speech at a public dinner abused the army for interfering with the expedition. I finally told General Scott that I had given mortal offence to all of this class of people and was now ready to be relieved if any senior officer desired to come here.

"Oct. 17. Monday. I am likely to have a judgment against me in the State court for 'contempt' in not delivering the *Arrow* to the county sheriff! I hear that he says it will do no harm to fine me \$5, and that he will add that I followed my instructions. Monstrous! The judge is in the hands of the adventurers. I do not much care what he does. I know I am right, and that is enough for me.

"P.M. It is rumored that a part of the expedition, with William Walker at the head, got off last night in a schooner. If true, this fully justifies my course. . . . A morning paper announces that on Sunday night a small vessel, the schooner *Caroline*, was towed out of the harbor with about 200 men on the Sonora expedition. . . . The vessel goes to sea with but a fragment of the original force organized by Walker—one out of the four companies—my action in the case of the *Arrow* having dispersed the remainder!"<sup>1</sup>

Even in the midst of this trouble with the filibuster senators and three United States civil officials forsworn, he frequently makes small excursions into the favorite field of philosophy, returns to Plato and Kant, and browses at the book-stalls. And about this time he comes again upon Cousin, the reviewer of philosophies. And as he reads he records in his diary, "All books are the chaff of the human intellect."

"Oct. 24. I have read some 150 pages of Cousin, and am strongly reminded of my original dislike of his mode of treating the subject. I find too much dogmatism or mere

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of Sonora." He went through the south to Mexico, bearing a letter from the Emperor to Bazaine, but the chimerical project was a failure and Gwin fled from Sonora and the country.

<sup>1</sup> In the diary for 1866, is recorded: "I was right in stopping the expedition for Sonora. My interference really frustrated Walker, who was unable to do anything with his fragment of the original party and the schooner. He made a foolish attempt to take possession of Lower California, but was finally abandoned by most of his men and returned to San Francisco. Subsequently he went on a filibustering expedition to Nicaragua and was caught and garroted."

asseveration—too much of the air of one who should say, ‘Behold how clear this is—this which heretofore has been so obscurely seen by the world!’ He says, indeed, that it is not he that speaks, but philosophy. But this is the most arrogant of all declarations—a sort of thus-saith-the-Lord phraseology. . . .

“I have to-day given away my land-warrant for 160 acres of land to my cousin. I have felt some disposition to locate this land in my own name and retain it, as it is for service in the field (in the Mexican War); but as it was in a detestable war, I have concluded to put it out of my hands.

“Oct. 29. . . . Hope and fear find their chief resting-places with those who are wanting in a reliance upon the order of events in this world. Mere faith in this order under what is called Providence does a great deal: knowledge of it must do a great deal more. But it is extremely difficult to pick up this sort of knowledge—such as a knowledge of astronomy which overcomes the power of superstition with regard to eclipses. This becomes faith in God and a knowledge of his providence. All wisdom and happiness seem to centre here.

“In the absence of this knowledge (and I do not pretend to it), I *try*, when I am about to do anything of importance, to put myself in such a frame of mind as to say to myself, ‘I can never undo this, and must therefore so do it that I shall not wish it undone.’ I can scarcely say that I have any other view of life. . . . As to hope and fear, I think I have very little of either and could be well content to have neither.

“San Francisco, Oct. 30. . . . Emerson’s *Essays* seem to me a series of self-examinations. The thoughts are uttered mostly in proverbs, but many of them need explanations except to readers of Plato, Swedenborg, and Tom Paine. . . . A distinct consciousness of the love of fame has never crossed my mind, but in reading Emerson I have been led to think of being myself. I must of necessity fall into oblivion, and the thought gives me something like a pang such as I do not remember ever before experiencing. Emerson *over-saw* multitudes of people.

“Dec. 13.—There is but one universe which contains, or

is, the totality of causes and likewise the totality of effects. These two are one—only not regarding things in time, as prior and subsequent. The same thing is relatively a cause in one case and an effect in another, but, absolutely, one. Things are regarded as causes when, in fact, they are only conditions.

“Dec. 16. The mail to-day brings a letter of approval of my work from the new Secretary of War. Previous order confirmed. I am specially designated to command the Department of the Pacific according to my brevet rank—certainly complimentary, considering that there are many officers of the army who rank me and yet are without department commands. . . . I have applied for leave of absence to go to the East, by way of China, India, etc.”



## CHAPTER LII

GENERAL WOOL SUPERSEDES HITCHCOCK BY ORDER OF JEFFERSON DAVIS, SECRETARY OF WAR. HITCHCOCK APPLIES FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE. SCOTT INDORSES APPLICATION. DAVIS ARBITRARILY REFUSES CONSENT

I N December and January the diarist wrote a hundred pages of metaphysical speculation, ending by reasserting the conclusion that God and Nature are the same thing—in their (or its) essence unchangeable. Then came important news from the East:

“San Francisco, Feb. 2, 1854. Steamer arrived to-day. Brings 140 men for the dragoons, and news that General Wool is coming to relieve me here. The order was issued by the Secretary of War (Jefferson Davis) without consultation with General Scott and unknown to him. What will they do with me? Mr. Davis is hostile to General Scott and to me as General Scott’s friend. While I have endeavored to do everything necessary in my position as an army officer, I have had no feeling of pride of position—none whatever. I have industriously sought to avoid observation, which most men seek to attract. My thoughts and feelings look inward—not from any pride of intellect or hope of fame, but simply in the hope of understanding something of this marvellous Existence in which I find myself—not at San Francisco in command of the Pacific Department, or in the United States, but in the universe of Nature. The outward ‘shows of things’ I do not despise, but they do not attract me. I see they are shadows.

“Feb. 4. The mail is distributed. Have a letter from a staff officer of General Scott giving me the General’s endorsement on my application for permission to go to China, etc. The approval of the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, is

necessary. General Scott approves of my application (as 'Gen. Wool is coming' here) and recommends my application, giving as his reason that my regiment, the 2d Infantry, is to be recruited under the superintendence of the lieutenant-colonel, and therefore I can be spared for the length of time required for the journey. General Wool's coming here may have in view the annexation of the Sandwich Islands; he may bring verbal reasons for sending me to take possession of them."

The diarist does not spend these weeks in recording conjectures about General Wool's mission or the fate of Hawaii, but he lives evermore with his books, and in a single day chronicles forty pages of philosophical soliloquy about the limits of knowledge, the nature of the soul, the definition of the Absolute, existence, wisdom, necessity, eternity, ubiquity, etc.

"There is something permanent in all men everywhere the same. If it be called soul, I have no objection; only let us keep to what we know of it and not fly off upon imagination and dream of its actual condition in the future beyond what we know. . . . The love of God, in popular language, is a vague, uncertain feeling, and mostly imaginative, but a love of the Permanent, when truly conceived, seems the permanent in man. This love ought to draw man towards the Permanent and wean him from the Transient.

"San Francisco, Feb. 16, 1854. Just after I had retired last evening, Capt. Tecumseh Sherman called and told me of the sad calamity of the loss of the *San Francisco* with Colonel Washington and 150 of our troops, and the arrival here of General Wool to supersede me. I called on him officially this morning and presented my staff—Major Townsend, Major Eaton, Major Cross, Major Larnard,<sup>1</sup> Major Smith, Surgeon

<sup>1</sup> On March 27, 1854, Major Larnard was drowned in Puget Sound. General Hitchcock wrote a notice of his friend which reflected his own character when he said: "Major Larnard never knew the burden of ennui. Engaged in the discharge of his duties he was prompt, active and efficient, leaving nothing for his superiors to desire, but the moment his duties left him leisure, he busied himself with literature, with art and with philosophy. With a competent knowledge of the ancient classical languages and of French and German, he added to the most extensive literary acquirements a profound insight into the various problems of religion, philosophy and government, which no scholar can evade without surrendering his convictions to blind authority."

Tripler and Lieutenant Gardner, all in full uniform. He indicated his purpose of assuming command to-morrow, and he has since been to my office, where I explained the distribution of troops, etc. The mail brought an order for me to repair to the head-quarters of the army at New York. My application for permission to return east *via* China, India, Persia, etc., made last November and approved by the General commanding, was not assented to by the Secretary of War, Col. Jefferson Davis.

“Why this request was refused I do not know. General Scott recommended it, and even stated in his endorsement on my application that my regiment was being recruited anew and that there was no service for me and would be none for the time required. I must put up with the decision, though I see no reason for it. In my own opinion officers of the army who can be spared and are willing to travel ought to be allowed to do so. It can never do harm and may do good. But civilians in office are sometimes narrow-minded. The War Department, unfortunately, is always administered by a politician selected from civil life with a view to politics, and without regard to either military or general knowledge.

“San F. Feb. 17. General Wool has issued this day his first order as in command of the Department of the Pacific. I may tarry here some weeks to settle my private business. I am now not in command, and not on duty—and I really feel relieved, in an agreeable sense. . . . Have been employed in burning old letters and memoranda—an exceedingly unpleasant task. Is it I myself? Am I the same person I was in 1844?—or 1824? It seems very strange.

“Feb. 24. On looking over these papers one fact gives me a melancholy gratification: notwithstanding the evidence of weakness in some respects, I do not absolutely condemn myself as having deliberately done a wrong thing. . . . My person, I suppose, has been tolerably good—my position respectable—my reputation fair; and I am supposed to be something of a student, while my manner is really and unaffectedly kind, especially to women, who seem naturally to confide in me. . . . In no case whatever have I ever begun or continued a course of conduct with an objectionable design.



"Feb. 26. . . . I find that my excellent and talented brother, Samuel, had copied in Latin two or three parts of the *Ethics* of Spinoza. His translation of these into English I consider faultless. I have twice copied it with my own hands. He was well qualified for the work of translation and adhered to the text with religious care."

The leisure which the arrival of General Wool gave the diarist had its usual effect: it turned his thoughts and pencil to philosophical speculation. In a week he writes fifty pages about what he calls the foundation of things, or existence, or *sub-stans*, which he finds to include the noumenon and phenomenon, seen and unseen, cause and effect, pleasure and pain, good and evil, wisdom and folly, excess and deficiency, eternity and time, and he finds them all included in Nature, whose other name is God, or Pan, "or, as Plato called it, the Whole." He now thinks of publishing a work on metaphysics, but the more he contemplates it the less inclined he seems.

"When a man sees the errors of the world he cannot repeat them, if conscientious, and may pass a life in search of the truth without feeling at liberty to publish anything. He would never repeat such discourse, and might hold his breath in very terror at the thought of his preposterous presumption.

"I have been reading once more the commentary upon the *Golden Verses of Hierocles*, and am half disposed to put as high a value upon it as upon any book in my collection, saving Plato and Spinoza—which enable me to put a meaning upon much that is in Hierocles himself—and excepting also Shakespeare and the Christian records. Hierocles was a great man—far superior to Antoninus, whose *Meditations* I also value. Of all ancient philosophers I put Pythagoras first, for Plato would never have been but for Pythagoras, as Cicero would never have been but for Plato."

## CHAPTER LIII

HITCHCOCK CONTEMPLATES RESIGNING. CLOSING UP BUSINESS AFFAIRS ON THE COAST. SUPERINTENDS RECRUITING SERVICE IN NEW YORK. ORDERED TO INDIAN COUNTRY UNDER IGNORANT AND BRUTAL COMMANDER. A TEMPORARY RESPITE

ON April 15, 1854, General Hitchcock left San Francisco for New York, *via* Panama.

"Left the Golden Gate at 4 P.M. The officers late of my staff proposed to escort me to the boat in full uniform; but I desired them not to do so, thanking them for their kindness, and they came on board in a body in undress uniform and very kindly took leave. Left all my business affairs in California in the hands of Capt. W. T. Sherman.<sup>1</sup> As we passed out, the Presidio gave me a 13-gun salute and I am content to be regretted by manly and intelligent men, as I know I am. . . .

"New York, May 9, 1854. Arrived at the dock at midnight, twenty-three days from San Francisco—a remarkably short passage. . . . Have been received in the most cordial manner by General Scott. After asking my preferences he has given me an order putting me on duty in the city in command of my regiment. I am to superintend recruiting.

"New York, May 28. . . . Our government seems disposed to take advantage of the great Eastern war at present occupying both England and France in the Black Sea, to

<sup>1</sup> Captain Sherman had resigned from the army six months before and had become a partner in a successful business firm in San Francisco during these "boom days," believing that there would be "little chance for much success in the army," and not dreaming that he would live to eclipse Xenophon's memorable march to the sea. During the next few years he and General Hitchcock exchanged hundreds of letters.

make a quarrel with Spain, really for the purpose of seizing the island of Cuba. I have not the smallest sympathy with the movement. I think that republican principles would be injured by the annexation of Cuba to the United States.

"I have been seriously thinking of resigning from the army. . . . I consider the slavery in our country an element guided by passion, rather than by reason, and its existence among us is shaking the whole fabric of our government. Abolitionists would abolish the institution of slavery as the real evil, whereas the real evil is the want of intelligence from which slavery itself took its rise. Men in a passion, as Plato says, are already slaves.

"As to leaving the army: I may do so if I choose at this time and no one notice me, for I am unknown except to a few friends. If I wait and a war with Spain be forced on us by the headlong ambition or false policy of the Cabinet at Washington it might be hazardous to retire, even though in principle opposed to the war, not only as unjustifiable towards Spain but as impolitic and injurious as respects ourselves. I do verily believe that such a war would be a downward instead of an onward step for our republican institutions, and might easily justify my own conscience in refusing to be an instrument in the unjust campaign.

"I might draw a line between my duty to remain in the army to repulse any attempt made from abroad upon us, and the questionable duty of going beyond our borders to inflict a direct wrong upon another people, with probable injury to us in the end. I had this point in consideration on entering into the Mexican War, the grievous wrong of which was perfectly apparent to me, but I did not resign. My principles were not then so clear to me as they have since become, and it would have been more difficult to act freely then than now—in case, I mean, of a war with Spain manifestly for the acquisition of Cuba.

"Besides, I am now less fitted for an arduous campaign. I have, in fact, a serious disability incurred I believe in the Mexican War, as a result of my sickness at Corpus Christi, where, for three months, I took large doses of quinine three times a day, which, I shall always believe was the proximate cause of a derangement of my nerves resulting in pains which



first took me to the Arkansas springs and subsequently to Wiesbaden, and which have compelled me to have constantly on hand a galvanic battery and to use it as required for my relief.

“New York, May 31. I am in doubt as to leaving the army, wishing to do so, but uncertain as to the result. I do not wish to be moved by the slightest disposition to avoid service and responsibility. One point of weight with me is my personal opinions, after reading Plato, as I have, and finding myself more than ever a cosmopolite. The truth is, I am not sufficiently devoted to my profession, or even to my government, to make *service* a pleasure. I consider war an evil, whether necessary or not. It indicates a state of comparative barbarism in the nation engaged in it. I am also doubtful as to governments, and feel disposed to think that with my views I ought to live under what Plato, in the *Statesman*, speaks of as the 7th government. The question remains whether I can pass from a practical to a theoretical life, and whether, being a member of society, I am not bound to act with it. If I resign I wish to do so in such a frame of mind as to have no after regrets. This, in fact, is the principle which I wish to have guide me in whatever I do, for my eternity is here and now.”

The slight service of superintending recruiting for his 2d regiment is not found exacting by General Hitchcock and he frequents the Nassau Street bookstores in June and finds therein tomes that greatly excite his interest and even lead his thoughts into new channels. Of these he gives us a hundred pages of comment and reflection. He does not forget Comte and Cousin, Spinoza, Kant, Porphyry, and the great neo-Platonists; but he finds there another class of books of which he has before seen little and these move him strangely. He finds several antique alchemical works on magic—works more than two centuries old, and not much in request in this bustling land of industrial progress.

“In any view Demiurgus, and no less the modern God, is an imaginary figment drawn into a seeming existence by the mere demands of the human imagination seeking a ground of conception as to how the thing is done. As Plato says, this is a ‘not very clever evasion’ to supply a defect of knowledge.

"These," he says, "are all very old worm-eaten little volumes, much soiled and worn." He thinks that he has come upon a valuable revelation of the antique mind; that heretics in those remote ages could not speak plainly about the Church without personal danger and therefore they spoke in symbols; that "all true alchemists pursued not gold but wisdom," for wisdom was the only true wealth; that when they spoke of turning base metals to gold they only meant to allude to transforming base thoughts and spiritual error into genuine knowledge; that they were compelled by hostile environments to express themselves in parables and similitudes. He thinks that if these alchemical works are to be read in a figurative sense they contain great and important truths, whereas, if they are to be taken literally they are "utter foolishness." He earnestly denies that he is an atheist, because we must believe in Nature, and Nature and God are one.

"I do not deny God, but I do emphatically discard men's imaginations about him, since, properly speaking, as the old Hebrews said, we can form no image of him.

The universe is all in all, and it makes no difference whether we call it God or Nature. This, if anything, is what the alchemists considered their 'secret.' It is an interesting point of view, showing that in ages past there was a class of men, not very numerous, indeed, and widely scattered, who were not affected by the common theological or even metaphysical disputes. There were men, as I have often suspected, who stood equally above Martin Luther and the Pope, and who saw that the true view did not depend upon the decision of the question at issue between them.

"Carlisle, Pa., July 13. Am ordered here by the Secretary of War to assume command of the barracks, where my regiment (six companies of it) is to be assembled."

This is the only allusion he makes in the diary for six weeks as to his professional duties at his new post; and one must read between the lines very assiduously to get the narrative (which he evidently regards as not worth recording) of drills, manœuvres, parades, instructions, penalties for disobedience and the slow progress of recruiting.

He makes frequent visits to Philadelphia and adds to



his alchemical collection. He buys Dante's *Vita Nuova* in French and becomes "perfectly certain" that Beatrice is no woman at all, but only a vision of Truth. The death of the lady does only signify that truth in this life can be but imperfectly attained.

"July 28. To speak of God as the King of Heaven, or a Being exercising an arbitrary will, is perfectly absurd. All men say that God is immutable, yet they talk as if he had ends and purposes, plans and means of accomplishing them; and they do not see that this supposes something above their God as an eternal principle which God must follow to remain immutable. We cannot say that God is great or little, good or bad, wise or foolish, but only that he is. Plainly God is beyond being influenced by us—that is, by our wishes or speculations. We cannot serve him but by serving humanity; we cannot move him but by moving humanity; we cannot please him but by pleasing humanity; we cannot offend him but by offending humanity."

The diarist says that, although he possesses five manuscript copies of Spinoza's *Ethics* in English from the translation made by his brother Samuel, besides copies in French, German, and Latin, he still feels "a want," whereupon he begins another, the third he has made with his own hand, and copies "the whole work, extending to over 880 pages of large-size note paper—no small job."

Suddenly, in the early spring of 1855, there came an order transferring him to other scenes: "the most fatal order that has ever been issued in any way affecting me," he writes. It organizes an expedition into the Sioux country about Fort Laramie and appoints to its command a man whom he regards as both ignorant and brutal, "the man whom I hold in least respect of all men in the army," he records in his diary. What shall he do? "I have intimated to General Scott my wish for a leave of absence for three months, and his aid, Colonel Scott, writes me that 'the General does not consider it at all important that you should be with your regiment at the new post to be established, and he will not fail to grant you a leave of absence upon your application after you reach St. Louis.' "

General Hitchcock thinks that perhaps he can escape from



the expedition through a prolonged leave of absence, and makes an effort to obtain it.

"April 29. . . . The prosecution of my studies ought to be carried on in a sort of serious silence. I must expect no sympathy or countenance from without, and no reward of any sort except such as may grow internally from the possession of the Truth. But there is no higher satisfaction than in thus living. It is free from enthusiasm, and being a present possession it is not dependent on hope, while it is free from fear no less. The hermetic philosophers are the true philosophers. They are a solemn class of writers, for a glimpse of a true eternity abolishes all selfishness and fills the soul with an amiable tenderness towards mankind.

"April 30. The Colonel has been my guest here for a month. Passing whole evenings in his company I have often spoken of my hobby, avoiding it, however, as much as civility required, and have been struck with the entire blank in his mind upon the whole subject of man, his origin and destiny. I have two large cases of books extending from floor to ceiling written by earnest and learned men in ages past concerning the nature he carries about with him wherever he goes, and he is dead to their influence! This may show me how little sympathy I may look for from what is called 'the world' in my alchemical studies. So be it!"

Thus reconciled to solitary pursuits he goes on examining London catalogues of quaint tomes, buying books to explain his existing library, and reading, thinking, and writing. Every few weeks is the entry, "Received to-day another box of books from London"—with sometimes a list of the additions. And always, from the annoyances of camp life and the irritations of the service, he turns to the hermetic pages for comfort.

"St. Louis, Mo., June 25. It is high time that I should note that I have been here since the 6th instant. I left Carlisle Barracks on the 3d with head-quarters and four companies of the 2d Infantry, came on here, and my leave of absence took effect—for four months. I am again at my old home. . . .

"St. Louis, Aug. 3. To-day sent a power of attorney

to Ethan A. Allen, of New York City, to enable him to recover the 'land' voted by Congress to our grandfather, Col. Ethan Allen, of Ticonderoga, for services before the Declaration of Independence was written."

## CHAPTER LIV

ANTAGONISM OF DAVIS AND SCOTT. HITCHCOCK PROMPTLY RESIGNS AND SAVES SCOTT TO THE ARMY. ESCAPES PARTICIPATION IN INDIAN MASSACRE. RETIREMENT TO PRIVATE LIFE. STUDENT AND AUTHOR

**M**EANTIME General Hitchcock's leave of absence rapidly approached its termination. His request for its extension had been granted by General Scott, but was refused by the Secretary of War in a very offensive manner. The President of the United States, who had defeated General Scott before the people, had not been rendered amicable by his triumph, and for two years had done much to harass the victor of Mexico and to annoy all of his friends. Indeed, it was notorious that President Pierce had called Jefferson Davis to be Secretary of War partly because of the violent hostility of that gentleman to Scott and his champions.<sup>1</sup> General Hitchcock had been conspicuous as one of these, not only during the Mexican War, but ever since. The time now came when he could be curtly "turned down," *i.e.*, when his request that he should not be ordered to serve under a man whom he despised might be disregarded and his application for further leave of absence refused.

General Scott had extended General Hitchcock's leave of absence for three months more. The Secretary of War, Davis, held it up and immediately wrote to General Scott, demanding his reasons for such an act of favoritism, and countermanded the General's order.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the diary of 1867: "It was this hostility that was the cause of Secretary Davis's rude and unwarrantable interference with the legitimate use of the power belonging by army regulations to General Scott, who had given me a leave of absence. This was the immediate cause of my resignation in 1855."



General Scott replied that he had granted the leave of absence because he had the right to do it, and was convinced of its propriety, that he was not responsible to the Secretary of War for his action in such cases, and that he would be obliged to him if hereafter, in any official communications he might have occasion to address him, he would write in the name of the President of the United States, the only official superior whom he (Scott) recognized.

Secretary Davis in reply entered into a very elaborate and detailed exposition of all the alleged breaches of order and violations of propriety committed by General Scott during his whole military career.

At this point General Hitchcock felt that it was time for him to interpose to save General Scott to the army. This he could do only by resigning. He did not hesitate.

"St. Louis, Oct. 6, 1855. I have prepared a letter, now on the table before me, addressed to Colonel Thomas, Asst. Adj.-General to General Scott, tendering the resignation of my commission in the army. My leave of absence terminates to-day, and I have thought for several years that if circumstances should compel me to serve under ——'s orders, I would resign. It has now happened. I have been placed under the orders of a man for whom I have not the smallest respect—a man without education, intelligence, or humanity. I have not acted hastily. I have not resigned in a passion. I am not under the influence of anger or pique, nor do I feel a sense of mortification because an unworthy man has been set over me. Least of all do I suppose that I shall be missed from the army, or that my country will notice my withdrawal to private life. I know how little a great nation depends upon any mere individual, and how still less upon so humble a person as myself. I am content to be unnoticed. If I could really do some great and glorious good I should be willing to take the reputation of it, but I have not the smallest desire for mere notoriety. It is a rare thing in our service for a full colonel (brevet brigadier-general) to resign, and thereby relinquish all contingent advantages, but I voluntarily surrender them all rather than to place myself under orders of such a man as I know —— to be."

Shortly after these words were written a messenger came

galloping across the prairies towards St. Louis telling the story that our soldiers, under——'s command, had perpetrated the bloody butchery of Ash Hollow, in which, after a treacherous parley, and while they were negotiating terms of peace, they fell upon the Brules and exterminated the tribe. The *New York Tribune* characterized it as "a transaction as shameful, detestable, and cruel as anywhere sullies our annals," and the *St. Louis News* said that the commander "divested himself of the attributes of civilized humanity and turned himself into a treacherous demon, remorseless and bloodthirsty." When he read the horrible narrative General Hitchcock congratulated himself anew on having sent his resignation.

In due time came announcement that the resignation of his commission had been accepted by the President and Secretary of War—no doubt gladly. His regimental officers assembled and gave him a warm good-bye, expressing in writing their "regret at losing so valuable an officer," and adding:

"His uniform gentlemanly bearing and his high military character, combined with his unvarying kindness, consideration, and urbanity as an officer, have alike claimed our respect and endeared him to all our hearts. It is with sincere regret that we part with him, and we can only express our warmest wishes that the remainder of his life may be passed in the quiet enjoyment of the honor and respect which he has so justly won from all with whom he has come in contact."

The *St. Louis Democrat* said:

"There is not a single officer in the army more nobly characterized by steady, soldier-like resolution, gentlemanly bearing, unimpeached and unimpeachable integrity, and thorough fitness for any duty devolved upon him. To his qualities as an officer he has added high attainments as a scholar, and thorough devotion to high and correct principles as a man in private as well as in public life. Such men we wish might remain in the army."

The *Springfield Republican* said:

"Gen. Ethan Allen Hitchcock had too much spirit to brook so manifest an indignity offered to himself and his commander-in-chief, and threw up his commission in disgust. No doubt the



President was instructed by his Secretary to accept the resignation of an officer whom the latter had so wantonly insulted. It was accepted accordingly."

The *National Intelligencer* said that a man who had been brevetted a brigadier-general, for gallant and distinguished services in the storming of Molino del Rey could afford to be driven from the army "by a man who had fainted on the field." To this General Hitchcock replied that he regretted to see politics introduced and did not relish "being complimented at the expense of another."

Devout pantheism is a reflection of much of the diarist's meditations during all these years, and he frequently breaks in with a protest that instead of abandoning such views he becomes ever more and more certain of their truth. He even expresses gratitude to Nature and his environments that he has been saved from popular follies of dogma to "the foundation of things" in the unity of Existence. Weeks and months go by without the least comment on his abandonment of his life-long profession. At least, at the year's end he closes the book with this brief page of reminiscence, and if he felt exultation or even complacency at the record there is not the least sign of it:

"I must say, for myself, that I have never exercised power simply in virtue of my commission, but have always felt that I was at liberty to use it only in conformity with the 'higher law' of justice. No soldier has ever had cause to complain of me, so far as I know or believe.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, I have felt the high obligation of justice so strongly that it has long been my opinion that the possession of power is a curse to him who does not know this obligation and obey it."

When it is remembered that being placed in arbitrary command over human beings has an invariable tendency to breed a tyrannical spirit, and that this tendency is stronger in the army than anywhere else, because the command is absolute, the whole significance of this soliloquy becomes apparent. How many officers have ever been able to repeat it? However immersed in metaphysical speculation this student may have been, the ability to calmly utter such a

<sup>1</sup> Often Hitchcock speaks of his soldiers as "our people."



remarkable declaration to himself must have caused him to hail the new year, 1856, with an inward sense of satisfaction.

The next book (200 pages of diary, running from January to the middle of March) he begins with the following inscription on the fly-leaf: "Mostly mere speculations. I am an inquirer. E. A. H." Then he plunges anew into his books—of the alchemical books alone he has again accumulated a goodly library, some very rare and expensive. He regards them as important enigmas. And once more he thinks aloud and looks at monism from various points of view, adding:

"I see no reason why I should not set down my thoughts as I go along, even though I repeat them as often as a creed is repeated in most churches, that is, once or twice or thrice a week."

Long before this time he has come to the firm conclusion not only that the pretences of the alchemists were symbolical and a method of hiding their real meaning in commonplace phraseology, but that their ulterior purpose was religious, and that they dealt in "the dietetics of the soul."

And week by week he buys new and strange books and reads and ponders them and fills them with marginal pencilings: *Nosce te Ipsum*, an ancient poem on the immortality of the soul; Agrippa's *Vanity of the Sciences*; *Philalethe*; the writings of Ocellus Lucanus; *Mirum in Modum*; a *Glimpse of God's Glorie and the Soules Shape*,—"this cost \$25—a high price."

And ever he reverts to the old favorites—to "Spinoza, the reputed atheist," to Toland, to Socrates, to Van Helmont, to Hobbes, to Paracelsus, to Leibnitz, to the Vishnu Purana, to the Bhagavat Geeta. He reads *Metamorphosis, or the Golden Ass of Apuleius*, founded on the Eleusinian Mysteries, and corresponding to the notions of the hermetic philosophy.

Some of the meditations and conclusions of these months when, as he says, he is "on permanent leave of absence," it may be well to take the space to quote here:

"Most people consider disobedience to God literally possible, and attribute it to a misdirected free-will in man, but I dissent from this view altogether. There can be no such thing as actual disobedience of God, for this would defeat

omnipotence and destroy the immutability of God. . . . God is Nature: Nature is God."

"Matter can not be conceived of as created—that is, can not be supposed as beginning to exist from nothing at any certain time. The notion of the creation of the world out of nothing, say, 6000 years ago, seems the most absurd fancy. The world, as it exists in God, was never created, and as it manifests the unseen it is a generated phenomenon—was not generated six thousand or six million years ago, but is being generated now while I write. The world, in a certain sense may be said to be *forever becoming* in the *forever existing*—the two being one."

"Feb. 19, 1856. The ship *Mary Green* from Liverpool has been lost with (just) twenty separate works on alchemy which I ordered from London some months ago. I am extremely sorry to lose these works, though I can do without them, and almost think I could bear the loss of all of my alchemical works, having appropriated all that I shall ever learn from them. True alchemy, like geometry, is independent of the books that teach it. They are aids, not ends.

"St. Louis, Feb. 22. The anniversary of the birth of the great and good Washington, whose name I often think of in connection with that of Archytas, the ancient Pythagorean law-giver. Can it be that our mad people are tending to a disruption of the Union of these States? The first actual step would be a step towards desperate civil war, with consequences not to be thought of without horror!

". . . I do not consider Cousin a philosopher, though he actually claims the title, which is more than Plato did. He seems to me a laborious superficialist, respectable only in that he seems to wish well to man and would elevate his tastes if he could. His constant rattle of words about art, taste, genius, philosophy, etc., is little less than noise to me, and I turn from him to Spinoza with the greatest relish, such as a man may feel in passing from cloudy, foggy weather into the clear warm sun. . . . To me Spinoza's cheerfulness and unaffected placidity is worth more than all the stormy whirlpools of passion of all the Byrons the world ever saw."

The next number of the diary extends to June, 1856,



and occupies 256 compactly written pages, consisting mostly of metaphysical argument and philosophical soliloquy. Considerations of worldly things, and speculations as to losses and gains, seem to have been renounced when he doffed his epaulets and laid down his sword. He now thinks that there are many other things more important, and that they are largely occult.

"St. Louis, March 16, 1856. It is impossible to know anything about the absolute origin or end of things. We may say that God is the origin, but this is only giving a name to our ignorance. It does not remove the mystery; and it is not I who am atheistical in this confession of my ignorance, but this charge lies rather at the door of those who suppose they have removed the veil, either by reason or revelation. . . . I have just re-read that beautiful, most beautiful commentary of Hierocles on the *Golden Verses of Pythagoras*.

"March 28. Have received a letter from my book-buyer saying that he has obtained for me some 80 volumes on Alchemy, Hermetic philosophy, etc., ordered some weeks since on a London catalogue."

In this book the diarist marks out to his own satisfaction something like a demonstration of his moral conclusions, using for his visible symbols the triangle, the circle, and the cone, with the resulting ellipse, parabola and hyperbola. These last three figures, he says, make a very good symbol for the hermetic trinity. He does not at all embrace the complicated and abstruse doctrines of the esoterics of the Middle Ages, but he uses those theories as tools to work with in his search for truth. He comes to the conclusion that Existence is the first thing of which the mind can be certain; and that God and Nature are equally governed by law, and that the law, like the rules of mathematics by which twice two are always four and a triangle always has three corners, never had a creator or a beginning.

"St. Louis, April 7. It is surprising how few people ever inquire into the important questions of God, the soul, etc., and not only do they make no inquiries themselves, but they do not allow others to inquire. This finally subjects them to the dictation of some fellow-traveller in time (and eternity) who, for the simple reason of being a preacher about God, is supposed to know something of him. I think the chances



are that preachers know even less of the nature of God than many others."

Before reading the next quotation the reader is requested to remember that this reference of all things to "Evolution" was before that word had been used to explain the universe except in the most restricted sense, and two years before Darwin's remarkable work on *The Origin of Species* was published:

"Nature is not, properly speaking, a creation (from nothing), but rather an evolution of something uncreated. This something uncreated is what people call God, and imagine vainly about it. The only true recourse is to the thing itself—Nature. This is not a consummation of knowledge, but a true beginning."

The next volume of this continuous diary extends from June, 1856, to March, 1858, and contains 240 pages—mostly in ink, for the writer has now a table and perhaps a stationary desk in place of the saddle or barrel-head which he frequently used during active service in the field. He resumes the problem of life, ever old and ever new, and discusses the Whence, Why, and Whither; the philosopher's stone of the alchemists, the real meaning of the elixir of life, the *Radix Mundi* of Roger Bacon, the secrets of Zosimus and Hermes Trismegistus, the arts of Raymond Lully and Augustus of Saxony, the mysterious necromancy of Paracelsus, the red tincture and the major and minor magisterium, the esoteric readings of Dante, the mysticism of Jacob Behmen and the nexus of Swendenborg, and the substance, essence, and existence of things.

During this year he adds antique writings largely to his library and lives with his books. Many of the additions have strange and grotesque titles: *Jehoir, or the Morning Light of Wisdom*; *The Philosophical Epitaph of W. C. Esquire, for a Memento Mori on the Philosopher's (Tomb) Stone*; *The Idiot in Four Books, the 1st and 2nd of Wisdom, the 3rd of the Minde, the 4th of Staticke Experiments of the Balance*.

The diarist reads Glanville's *Defence of Miracles*, and criticises it:

"Who talks nowadays of Aaron's rod being turned into a serpent or of the witch of Endor or the story of Jonah except

as allegories? The fact is that Mr. Glanville does not distinguish between an occurrence and the explanation of it—between our knowledge that a thing happened and our want of knowledge as to how it happened. We do not understand the how of the simplest thing in nature, and therefore he would have us believe anything, however opposed to reason and observation. We do not know how grass grows, but we do know that it grows. Now we do not know that Aaron's rod turned into a serpent; and until we know this we may be excused from puzzling ourselves as to the How."

On Oct. 18, 1856, Captain Sherman writes him from San Francisco: "The Black Republicans and the Vigilance Committee have united and will carry the city. . . . Even if Fremont should be elected, I hold it to be the duty of every good citizen to abide his administration. I hope our form of government is strong enough to stand anything." Again the diary:

"There never was a time when there was nothing. Things are not created, but generated, and all things are subject to change but incapable of annihilation. To say that Nature needs a creator to bring it into existence, on the ground that nothing can exist but from some cause or power adequate to bring it into existence, is pure nonsense, when God is defined in the next breath as a self-existent, uncreated Being.

"If God is both infinitely good and infinitely powerful and is also the author of all things, how can anything bad exist?"

During the winter of 1856-7 General Hitchcock writes a volume of 300 pages entitled *Remarks upon Alchemy and the Alchemists, Indicating a Method of Discovering the True Nature of Hermetic Philosophy; and Showing that the Search after the Philosopher's Stone had not for its Object the Discovery of an Agent for the Transmutation of Metals. Being also an Attempt to Rescue from undeserved Opprobrium the Reputation of a class of Extraordinary Thinkers in Past Ages.*

In this book, published in Boston, the author sets forth the reasons for his contention that the alchemists were neither frauds nor dupes but that they spoke in symbolic language, and that the real subject of all their desires and efforts was not any philosopher's stone or any transmutation of base



metals into gold, but was distinctly the human race and its improvement. The one desirable thing was wisdom,—that self-knowledge from which flows the uprightness of life which is salvation.

These three years seem to have been assigned to study and writing, for very little appears in the diary concerning either public or private matters. His voluminous speculations assumed definite proportions and relations and appeared in the form of books. He next published *Swedenborg a Hermetic Philosopher*.

“St. Louis, Mo., March 19, 1860. I have brought with me to-day from the binder a first copy of a work I have ventured to publish with the title of *Christ the Spirit* (375 pages, 12mo). In this work I have freely expressed my opinion of the gospels. I believe the view I take is essentially the same as that of St. Paul, who said, ‘The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life.’ This, I say, is the doctrine of Christ as expressed in John vi, 63, ‘It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh [letter] profiteth nothing.’ I do verily believe that in this volume I have stated more truth in exposition of the scriptures than has appeared in a written form for centuries. I am perfectly willing to die upon this book; whether I should be willing to die for it, is another question. I have long thought that Galileo was wise in not allowing the Inquisition to commit the enormous crime of burning him at the stake for saying ‘The world moves.’ ”

The diarist had long been in the habit of examining all sorts of subjective phenomena and he now gives a few weeks to spiritualism—to the delphic utterances of its lecturers and the strange experiences of its mediums. He talks with many and even seeks them out for the purpose of investigation, but he seems never to get any further in his conclusions than to be convinced that those whom he saw were honest and sincere and informed and assisted in some peculiar way, “like the Illuminati.”

It was about this time that, in the literary society of St. Louis, he met a young man who was to become one of his most intimate associates:

“May 4, 1860. Called to-day on Mr. William T. Harris. I have talked with him several times in my own library, but



to-day I saw him in his—a remarkable man. He has charge of one of the public academies of the city. He is thoroughly imbued with what Socrates would undoubtedly have been delighted with—the philosophic spirit, a true love of philosophy. He is a young man, but looks at principles without disregarding facts. He is more in love with Hegel than would be altogether to my taste, but he will outgrow this as his own mind reveals itself to itself.”

This notes the beginning of an acquaintance which ripened into a warm and enduring friendship. General Hitchcock was more than sixty, and his new friend was but twenty-four; but the latter revealed such broadmindedness and such scholarly tastes and habits that the elder philosopher cordially drew him to his side as the successor to the genial Bliss and Larnard of former days.

During the next turbulent years, in the midst of alarm, grief, and carnage, they kept up a continuous and voluminous correspondence, General Hitchcock occasionally writing him a letter of twenty compact pages upon those metaphysical researches which equally occupied the minds of both. Once, while pondering some abstruse problem, he exclaimed to himself, “I need Harris more than anybody else.”

## CHAPTER LV

ON THE EVE OF STRIFE. HITCHCOCK PLEADS AGAINST DISUNION.

“NO STATE HAS A RIGHT TO SECEDE.” “AND I HAVE LIVED TO SEE THIS BLOW.” DEMAND FOR HITCHCOCK’S RECALL TO THE ARMY. A COMMISSION AS MAJOR-GENERAL OFFERED HIM BY SCOTT. ILL HEALTH PREVENTS ACCEPTANCE

**I**T is the autumn of 1860. The election is over; Lincoln is to be President; much excitement prevails; disunion is threatened. “Considerable apprehension,” writes the diarist on Nov. 26, 1860; and on Feb. 3d he adds: “I have been a greatly distressed observer of this movement, though I have made little note of it. The cotton States have passed ‘ordinances of secession.’ Our hopes now rest upon the Northern line of slave States. If they remain in the Union, and no blood be shed, there is a slight hope that something may be done to heal the breach.” On Jan. 30, 1861, General Hitchcock writes to General Scott from St. Louis warning him of the danger of an attack on the arsenal.

In the St. Louis *Republican* of Feb. 3, 1861, is a column letter from General Hitchcock full of earnest but temperate pleas for the Union. He says: “We seem to be making rapid strides towards civil war, the most deplorable of all wars, and if it is begun in this country the generation in which it begins may not see the end of it, but will witness an end to the prosperity of the country—its glory and its happiness.” He proceeds to add that slavery exists without anybody’s fault; that the States where it exists should be left entirely free to deal with it; that the mere existence of slavery is not a sin, for control over the slave can alone save him from destruction; that “erroneous opinions on this subject in the North have driven the South into a revolution”; that South

Carolina is wrong and unreasonable; that "a rebellion on a limited scale in any section of the country ought to be put down by the power of the government, but when it extends over a large portion of the country, solemnly acting through its local authorities, representing certain reserved rights, it becomes another question, and I say God forbid that the government of the United States should attempt the use of force in this case." He then calls attention to the fact that Missouri is a wedge thrust up into the free States and that it can escape destruction only by standing by the Union; and he closes by saying: "If we of this age would make one tenth of the sacrifices, and these only of pride of opinion, to preserve this government, which our sires and grandsires made to establish it, the historian might yet brush away the tear that stands ready to blur this paper."

The next day he publishes another column letter to the people, in which appeared the following vigorous argument:

"No State has a right to secede from the Union. The Union is a compact by which the whole of the States, through the General Government, are bound to defend each State from foreign invasion.

"A few years ago, a colored man was taken from an English vessel in Charleston Harbor by the authorities of that State, and confined until the vessel was ready to sail. This was an aggression upon England, and was so regarded by the English papers. Suppose the English Government had, at that time, sent a war vessel into Charleston Harbor to demand satisfaction? Would the Government of the United States have had any right to secede from South Carolina and leave her to fight her own battles? If the demand of South Carolina for protection, under such circumstances, was a right on her part—which no one can deny—then the government could have no right to disown the obligation. But obligations are always mutual, and South Carolina must be considered as much bound to the Union as the Union is bound to her."

A week later he published another vigorous but kindly remonstrance against secession, adding that he would approve "of anything that the North and South can agree upon to save the Union, and would agree, except out of curiosity, never to ask any questions about it, so much before all other considerations do I value the Union of all the States."



“St. Louis, April 13, 1861. News comes that Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor was under fire all day yesterday from the batteries established around it by the forces of the seceded Confederate States. The seceders summoned Major Anderson to surrender, and, upon his declining to do so, they commenced the fire. They have now unmistakably begun the civil war which must signalize the death of the grandest republic the world has ever seen. And I have lived to see this blow!

“St. Louis, May 6, 1861. I am packing up for New York, my object being to get out of the secession fever which now agitates this city and State. There are 27 boxes of books.

“Many friends urge my return to the army.<sup>1</sup> But I have no heart for engaging in a civil war. I cannot think of it. If fighting could preserve the Union (or restore it) I might consider what I could do to take part—but when did fighting make friends? To my vision—and I note it with a feeling of dread—the great American Republic is broken up. What is to come out of it can hardly be imagined just now.”

On May 10th war began in Missouri. Lyon, commanding the U. S. arsenal, surrounded and captured a regiment of militia, whose friends afterwards fired upon his troops and in the return fire several were killed. At this General Hitchcock delayed his departure, to witness and, if possible, to assist the return of tranquillity.

“After the affair of the 10th there was a dreadful state of excitement. Next day, as I was passing through the city on a street car, a gentleman saw me and, jumping in, said he was on the way out to see me, as General Harney had sent him and expressed a wish to advise with me. Harney had asked the gentleman, who knew of our cold relations and that there had been only ceremonious intercourse between us for years, whether he thought I would consent to see him! I said, ‘Certainly; if General Harney wishes to see me on public business, I will go.’ So we met and the public excitement was immediately the topic. Being appealed to as to what

<sup>1</sup> On April 20, Governor Pomeroy wrote to him and said that Vermont desired to place her troops under the command of “the grandson of Ethan Allen.” Ill health prevented his acceptance of the commission.

should be done, I advised General Harney to announce his arrival from the East in a proclamation to the people, with suitable expressions, etc. The General approved the plan; Judge Krum, who was present, wrote the proclamation, and it was received with great satisfaction. Next day we met again, and the General suggested addressing a letter to the people of the State. It was agreed to and the Judge and I wrote it—mostly mine. This letter had a good effect.

“A day or two later Sterling Price, who had been made Major-General of the State militia, was sent for at my suggestion, and he and Harney agreed upon the terms of peace and reduced their agreement to writing and signed it. (I wrote the paper.)

“For the present no signs of distrust have appeared, and peace may continue if the parties to it maintain fidelity. What is to come out of this, no one can tell. My own opinion is that if the Federal army in the East meets with success we shall hear no more of secession in Missouri (beyond a little jostling, here and there); but if the Federal forces meet with reverses the secession feeling will rise in Missouri and serious results may follow.

“Green Bay, June 10. Left St. Louis finally on May 28th. Hear that General Harney was relieved from the command at St. Louis on the 30th, by an order bearing date the 16th!! The papers express astonishment at the date. My theory about the matter is that the Secretary of War distrusted General Harney and sent the order subject to the control of a political junto at St. Louis—probably of Black Republicans!!!

“Saratoga Springs, N. Y., July 6. . . . The President asks for unlimited men and money to put down the great Rebellion in the South. It may be done if the war is understood to be against the rebellious party as a party, and not against the South as a people. If its effect should be to divide the North on questions connected with it,—then, farewell to the Republic!

“New York, July 22. . . . The defeat at Bull Run yesterday was to be expected. The probability of it was so great that I have recently given the most positive opinion that General Scott would not order an attack at that point. I saw



no necessity for it. The proper course was to order McClellan's force to join Patterson's, then drive Johnston and thus threaten Richmond from a point west of Manassas, and compel the rebels to leave that position to secure their capital. 'Rebels?' Are they so if they can defeat the Northern army? or if this event should be followed by a recognition of their government by England and France? The prospect is very much darkened by this mishap. The secession feeling will rise in Maryland and Missouri, where hitherto it has been kept down.

"Concord, Mass., Aug. 13. I have taken a run out here to see Mr. Emerson, the 'Mystic,'—author of the *Essay on Circles*. I come to ask him to urge Carlyle to complete the translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*."

The newspapers of the North began, shortly after the Bull Run disaster, to suggest, and some of them to demand, that General Hitchcock be recalled into the service. General Scott had nominated him to President Lincoln as "the ablest military officer out of service." Colonel Townsend, of the Adjutant-General's office, had sent word to General Hitchcock that General Scott had named him "the first to be recalled to service," but that a member of the Cabinet<sup>1</sup> had objected.

The Boston *Courier* had an editorial supporting Scott's suggestion that General Hitchcock be recalled and added:

"This gallant and distinguished officer was felt worthy of extraordinary confidence by the government, while in the service, for his marked integrity of character as well as for remarkable military accomplishments and acquisitions. On the latter account we have understood that he was sometimes called the 'Cæsar of the army.'"

The New York *Evening Post* followed with a highly complimentary editorial in which it alluded to him as "one of the very best officers the army of the United States ever had," and added: "His thorough knowledge of the art of war and

<sup>1</sup> The Boston *Traveler's* Washington correspondent said at this time: "Earnest efforts have been made to induce Mr. Lincoln to accept the services of Gen. E. A. Hitchcock, formerly an officer of the army, of great distinction, efficiency, and merit. Unfortunately for the country, there is a man in power here who was once exposed by Hitchcock, then a major, in an attempt to speculate upon the credulity of the Winnebago Indians."



his long experience in equipping and disciplining troops make him one of the most desirable acquisitions which the service could receive."

For the assertion that he had been called "the Cæsar of the army" on account of his military skill and his learning, he enters a disclaimer in his diary:

"I never claimed to be a Cæsar or heard that any one ever placed my name so high. . . . As to going into the army, I have no particular wish for it. In the first place, I am past 63, and, though my general health is good, I keep it so by a regularity of living which campaign life would hardly permit me to keep up. Men of my age may well be employed in council, but not in field. An active soldier, conducting troops, ought rarely to be over 40 years of age. Another point is, I have no heart in this horrible war, and hardly think I shall have until it becomes aggressive on the part of the South. I deny the right of the South to secede and break up the Union, but, the step having been taken, I do not see how the nation is to be reinstated as it was before.

"The republic, as such, must from this time change its character whatever the result of the conflict, and I do not perceive a prospective value in it, if it must call me, an elderly if not an old man, from the retirement of private life, to which I voluntarily withdrew several years ago, and in which I have become interested in a course of study of more importance to me personally than any external government can be. . . . If a younger man, I might feel it a duty, in the present state of the country, to take part in public events."

General Scott's desire to have his old Inspector-General once more at the front was so strong that he induced Mr. Lincoln to lay the subject before the Cabinet.

"Oct. 4. The public still takes liberties with my name. I have not authorized its use in the public prints in any way and have no wish to appear before the public."

The New York *Express* said of him:

"It is well known that this high-minded and valiant officer once refused to lend himself to a low intrigue in the way of some official contracts, and that he has long been frowned upon by an officer of high position in the War Department. If this is the

cause of the present obscurity of this tried soldier and most brave and accomplished officer, the country should know it and the outrage be resented. Disgraceful, indeed, is it that an accomplished officer in this trying hour should be the victim of official prejudice and ignorance, when his services are so imperatively needed. Especially outrageous that an official wrong should be inflicted on a direct descendant of Ethan Allen."

"Feb. 2, 1862. General Halleck told me this morning that he had received a letter from General McClellan and that I would 'certainly' be appointed a major-general of volunteers. This news does not please me. Not that I am unwilling to serve my country in her hour of trial, but that I am unaffectedly of opinion that younger men can render more efficient service. To keep my health reasonably good I need to live a less exposed life than a soldier's. My impression now is that I shall decline the appointment if it is offered to me. It is a kind of patriotism to do so, for I cannot hope to render a service to the public commensurate with the pay and expenses my appointment might impose upon the government."

On February 5th General Hitchcock was informed by General Scott that a commission as major-general was ready for him (it was issued on the 10th) and he was told that he would be sent to supersede General Grant operating against Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee. He at once protested against being put over the head of Grant, who was obviously "doing all he can."

"St. Louis, Feb. 20, 1862. Have been appointed major-general of volunteers, and the appointment has been unanimously confirmed by the Senate. And before it reaches me I have written to the Secretary of War declining it. My health will not allow me to accept it, if there were no other reason. I preserve the appearance of good health only by the strictest care, simplicity of diet, and regularity of habits. To this I am told that my counsel and experience are needed, not service in the field.

"My friends urge me to make the trial: that I can withdraw if the service is too severe. To this I answer that it is easy to stay out, but difficult to withdraw when once in.

Suppose I take my place in the service now while the waters are smooth; I get along very well. Presently the sea becomes turbulent—how could I then withdraw without dishonor? Suppose I take service in the midst of these successes, having had no part in any of them. Now, all going well, I may remain in private life, and may justly plead that I am not robust enough for field service. This is at least honest and fair—fair to the noble fellows who have won the late victories as brigadier-generals while I am offered a major-general's commission and have had no part or lot, even in the preparation of troops by whose efforts the Union arms have been successful.

"I suppose the alacrity of the executive in giving me this appointment is a testimonial. It was just to offer me the commission, and is just for me to decline it."

Every mail brought to him clamorous letters from friends and others giving reasons why he ought to accept the commission—a principal plea being that a declination of it would be misunderstood and would give the secessionists much joy. To such he pleaded advanced age and long withdrawal from active military life, and added:

"An individual in an obscure position may give his life, indeed, to the public cause; but he hazards no more. He scarcely at all brings the cause itself into danger. This cannot be said of a commander; and I hold it a crime in any one to seek, and it may be even to accept, a position involving vast interests without a realizing sense of ability and suitable preparation for it.

"I know the terrible responsibility," he said to himself in his diary; "what if I should suffer physical collapse while at the head of an army?"

Among the hundreds of urgent letters which he received at this time were several from Gen. Joseph Holt, Mr. Buchanan's last Secretary of War and afterwards Mr. Lincoln's Judge Advocate-General, who said:

"I beg you to accept the high office in the military service of the republic which has just been tendered to you. You have neither sought nor desired this position, but the country, remembering your past devotion to the honor of our flag, has sought you



in your retirement and appeals to you for support as a stricken mother appeals to the manhood of her sons. Obedience to the call which has been made upon you may, at your age, involve you in much personal discomfort; but sorrow is now upon the hearts and hearthstones of all, and we can neither hope for nor desire personal ease while our country, humbled and distracted, is bleeding every hour under the stabs of traitors. When the Spartan mother was told that her son had fallen upon the battlefield in defence of his country, she sublimely answered, 'To this end I brought him into the world.' You have a name which is the very synonym of the chivalry of the Revolution, and I will not sadden myself with the thought that the history of this fearful life struggle of our country is to be written without that name, so illustrious in the past, appearing upon its pages."

## CHAPTER LVI

SUMMONED TO WASHINGTON BY STANTON. ILLNESS AND VIOLENT HEMORRHAGES ON THE WAY. INCOMPETENCE OF MCCLELLAN. OFFER OF THAT OFFICER'S COMMAND TO HITCHCOCK. REMARKABLE INTERVIEW WITH STANTON. MILITARY ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT. COMMISSIONER FOR EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS

**B**UT there were other reasons besides his physical condition why he shrank from taking upon himself at sixty-four the responsibilities of a leader of soldiers in the field. Whatever he had been at thirty, a lifetime of meditation, study, and self-communing had made his tastes those of a scholar rather than a warrior. While now waiting between telegrams from Washington, he records: "I have been a student all my life, even when I was a soldier by an education involuntarily received. I did not go to the Military Academy because I deliberately made choice of a military profession. I went because, being a grandson of Ethan Allen, some of the friends of our family thought it appropriate. If service can repay such an education, I served forty years. Is not that long enough?"

"Washington, March 15. On the 7th I received a telegraph despatch from the Secretary of War, saying that he would like a 'personal conference' with me, if my health would permit me to come to Washington 'immediately.' I jumped into the next departing train, had a serious and violent hemorrhage at Pittsburg, arrived here on Monday the 10th, and, weak and covered with dust as I was, went directly to the War Department (at 11 A.M.). Secretary Stanton was with the President, and the Assistant Secretary said he would mention my arrival and send me word. I returned to my hotel, and there was seized with a profuse

bleeding at the nose—the sixth or seventh time in three weeks. Two physicians finally stopped the bleeding by mechanical means and I was sent to bed, very much exhausted.

“After an hour or so an a. d. c. came with the Secretary’s compliments and a carriage. I could not go, and in the evening the Secretary himself came to see me. He was very kind; asked me to allow myself to be taken to his house, etc. He had wished to see me, he said, but would not talk with me exhausted as he saw I was, but would call in the morning.

“In the morning he called, finding me in bed. He told me that he wanted me in the service. I replied that I was not fit for service, and appealed to his own eyes. He remarked, ‘You must leave that to us,’ and went on to say that he and President Lincoln wanted the benefit of my experience—that they wanted me here, close by, where they could have the opportunity of consulting me. They did ‘not wish me in the field, but in Washington’; they ‘would put no more upon me than I could bear,’ and a multitude of other assurances of the kind. He even offered to remove the Adjutant-General and put me at the head of the staff.

“I turned these compliments all aside, with thanks, and said that I must go to New York to consult physicians—that if there was a return of the hemorrhage I wished to be with my friends, and should be, at all events, unfit for service.

“He left me and returned to the White House, and there wrote me a note in which he suggested that any legislation I might desire could be had, if I would but mention it. I replied that special legislation begot jealousies, and that if my experience was deemed of value it could be had by my simply remaining within call.

“I got up and started at 11 A.M. for New York.

“At New York I finally determined to say by note to the Secretary that if, with his knowledge of my broken health, I could be useful in the way he had pointed out, he might announce my acceptance of the commission if not now too late, and order me to report to him. That was done and I reached here this morning—March 15 [1862]. On reporting to the Secretary, almost without a word of preface he asked me if I would take McClellan’s place in command of the army



of the Potomac!<sup>1</sup> I was amazed, and told him at once that I could not. He spoke of the pressure on the President, and said that he and the President had had the greatest difficulty in standing out against the demand that McClellan be removed.

"He then asked me if I would allow him to put me at the head of the Ordnance Department, and remove General R. This surprised me almost as much as the other offer, and was entirely unlike anything I had anticipated, and I declined.

"He then took me to President Lincoln and introduced me. I was civilly received. Secretary Seward was present and some despatches were read—reports from the army, etc.

"The President took a letter out of his pocket and read it as a sample, he said, of what he was exposed to. It was anonymous, marked 'urgent,' and called on him to 'remove the traitor McClellan'—using the most extravagant language of condemnation. Judge Blair, Postmaster-General, came in and asked for a brigadier-general's commission for a relation of his wife.

"I offered to go, but Mr. Lincoln detained me till the others went. He then expressed the wish to have the benefit of my experience: said he was the depository of the power of the government and had no military knowledge. I knew his time was important and shortly left him.

"Now—what is to come of this? I want no command. I want no department. I came to be at hand for 'contingent service,' and must adhere to my purpose. General Scott, whom I saw in New York, told me I could be very useful here. He even said that I ought to be in command of the army, but that that was now impossible.

"I urged the Secretary to extend General Halleck's command over the whole valley of the Mississippi, and this has been done at once, putting Buell under his orders.

"On the whole, I am uncomfortable. I am almost afraid that Secretary Stanton hardly knows what he wants, himself.<sup>2</sup>

"Washington, Monday evening, March 17, 1862. A toler-

<sup>1</sup> The tardy engineer, McClellan, had now marched upon Manassas.

<sup>2</sup> During this week, an army board, of which General Hitchcock was President, decided that the safety of Washington required the retention in its front of one corps of the army. The President thereupon kept McDowell's corps between the city and Richmond.

ably quiet day, closing with the most tremendously threatening cloud I have ever had come near to me.

"How shall I describe it?

"First of all, this morning, in an interview with the Secretary of War, I declined his offers of a high station (two or three of them) and finally asked him if he would allow me to be placed under his own orders as a staff officer, to render such service as I might be capable of.

"He asked me to write the order myself and he would sign it. I wrote a simple order and he signed it and handed it to the Adjutant-General, with directions to distribute it.

"He then asked me to take a seat in his private council room, where I remained most of the day. Towards evening he came in, and, shutting the door behind him, stated to me the most astounding facts, all going to show the astonishing incompetency of General McClellan. I can not recite them: but the Secretary stated fact after fact, until I felt positively *sick*—that falling of the heart which excludes hope.

"I do not wonder, now, that the Secretary offered even me the command of this Army of the Potomac, which, he says, is 230,000 strong. If mentally capable, I am physically unable, to enter upon such responsibility.

"The Secretary is immensely distressed and with reason: he is dreadfully apprehensive of a great disaster, which, also, is not improbable. What can I do in this case?

"When the evening had set in we separated, the Secretary asking me to be at the office early. But to what purpose? I cannot now, on a sudden, improvise a campaign, having had nothing to do with the army now in the field. Truly, I am heart-sick.

"Washington, Mch. 23, Sunday. My intercourse becomes confidential, without design on either side, apparently. I have corroborated his opinions of certain persons without aiming to do so and before I knew what he thought. I wrote to him from Baltimore (on my way to N. Y.) that I would not be in haste to assign Fremont to a command, urging, as a reason, that he is the willing idol of a party whose design is to pervert the constitutional power of the government to



revolutionary purposes. It happened to be his own opinion, I found, on returning.

"To-day the Secretary asked me very abruptly what I thought of the Blairs.<sup>1</sup> I told him and found that my estimate agreed with his."

On April 2d, at the request of the Secretary, General Hitchcock drew up complete regulations for the government of officers in charge of prisoners of war, which were enforced to govern the actions of the Union army throughout the Rebellion.

"Washington, April 22, 1862. On the 13th I went down to McClellan's camp on the Peninsula, before Yorktown, and remained there one day. I had a full conversation with him in which he explained his contemplated plan for taking Yorktown. From Fortress Monroe I went on board the little *Monitor* that disabled and beat off the *Merrimac*, visited Goldsboro's flagship, etc."

When he returned to Washington he reported to the President and Secretary Stanton, but does not record any result or even conversation on the subject. It having been reported at this time that Secretary Stanton was soon to vacate his place, General Hitchcock was urged for Secretary of War by newspapers in different Northern cities, the *Boston Courier* following his nomination with, "There is not in our army a more accomplished officer—eminently national in his feelings, a powerful writer, and a gentleman of large experience, of vigorous mind, and of great executive ability." Then came more trouble for Secretary Stanton, and the account of it is carefully written in ink:

"Washington, April 29, '62. Yesterday I handed in the resignation of my commission of Major-General of volunteers. Thus:

"On Saturday, the 26th, the Secretary became for the first time a little impatient towards me. I had often seen him in such a mood towards others—towards General Ripley and General Thomas, and once even towards General Meigs, and at one time he spoke very abruptly to General Totten—

<sup>1</sup> In his diary General Hitchcock writes, "President Lincoln tells me that the Secretary and General Blair are not on speaking terms."



all members of the Army Board. I had resolved that I would not permit it towards myself.

“On Saturday he suddenly seemed to think that he had no one around him to give him opinions on military subjects, and at length he exclaimed: ‘It is very extraordinary that I can find no military man to give opinions. *You* give me no opinions!’ he added. The particular subject he had been speaking of was the position of General Banks. Now I had given him a very definite opinion on that very point two or three days before, and, without giving way to the least excitement, I asked him to look at the map, and pointed out what I thought and what I had said. I then briefly adverted to several opinions which I had given from time to time since I came here.

“After the conversation ceased, and the Secretary went to another room, I wrote a letter of resignation, designing to hand it in the next morning. As that was Sunday I deferred it to yesterday morning. He no sooner received it from the Adjutant-General, who told him it was because of something he had said on Saturday, than he came to the Adjutant-General’s room, where I had remained, and we had a scene of it. He declared in the most emphatic manner that he had no intention of wounding my feelings: that he knew he had faults of temper, etc.; that he was oppressed with a sense of his responsibilities, to which he knew he was not equal, etc.

“The first thing he said, however, was, ‘You don’t wish to ruin me?’ ‘Certainly not,’ I said. ‘If you send in that paper,’ said he, ‘you will destroy me!’”

The Secretary cried out in exclamations of self-reproach and lamentation and besought the General in humiliating terms not to proceed to such extremities. This appeal he repeated several times with visible emotion.

“I tried my best to stop him, assuring him that I had no intention of doing him any injury; that I could not see how my going away could affect him; that if he thought it would, I would destroy the paper. In the end, we went up to his room together, and I put the paper in the fire before his face. An hour or two afterwards he became more calm, and I took occasion to tell him many things which I hope will serve him.

His idea that my resignation would destroy him was not from the loss of my supposed services, but because he knows his reputation for acting on impulse and he knows that my withdrawal would be construed to his disadvantage."

During the next few weeks, General Hitchcock's physical afflictions returned upon him, and almost disabled him. He served as the military adviser and assistant of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton whenever he could go to the office.

"New York, May 21, 1862. Again sent in my resignation as Major-General on the 15th inst. I could not persuade the Secretary to accept it, and could not require it against his wishes. He told me to take a leave of absence, recruit my strength, and return when I felt sufficiently recovered. I told him (the truth) that I am positively ashamed to be in receipt of the pay and emoluments of a major-general and render no adequate service on account of disability. He proposed some nominal duty, as an inspecting duty to look into the condition of prisoners of war, but declined to make an order.

"New York, May 21. By this time I have discovered that the whole country has begun to look upon me as the 'Military Adviser' of the Secretary of War. This is very distasteful to me because it seems to make me responsible for those very movements which I have disapproved. In reply to requests by Secretary Stanton and Mr. Lincoln I made several important recommendations to both, which were ignored and disaster followed. Finally, when some troops were ordered out of the Shenandoah Valley against my urgent advice, and Stonewall Jackson made a successful raid on Banks and swept the Valley, I insisted upon resigning rather than, any longer, be put in a false position. Neither the Secretary nor the President would accept my resignation although offered thrice."

On May 28th, General Hitchcock wrote an elaborate letter to General Scott explaining his relation to affairs and protesting that he was made to bear responsibility for movements which he had expressly condemned in advance. He and General Thomas had been appointed by the President to report as to the number of men required to defend Washington.



They reported that 25,000 men were needed, whereas only 10,000 were present in the forts. Thereupon the President withheld a part of McDowell's corps from McClellan's army. General Hitchcock's repeated advice, however, that Blenker's division of Banks's corps should be withheld from Fremont for the defence of the city was ignored, and two months later the disaster occurred which he had predicted.

"New York, June 1, 1862. A few days ago I wrote a private note to Secretary Stanton calling his attention to my resignation and requesting him to announce its acceptance. I told him I had made a trial of several days' change of atmosphere as he had suggested, but did not feel strengthened to the point of making another experiment in Washington. I received a note from him yesterday, in which he refers to my ill health in very kind terms, but says that the President apprehends that acceptance of my resignation at this time might be misunderstood and might even be injurious to the public interests. He urges that I take an unlimited leave of absence till recovered.

"The injury apprehended, of course, is a public suspicion that I am dissatisfied with the conduct of the war—and this would be in some degree true. I was dissatisfied with General McClellan's movement to Yorktown. I repeatedly urged the President not to permit the Shenandoah Valley to be uncovered. He persisted, however, and Banks was driven out of it by Stonewall Jackson and across the Potomac."

The time from May to November is spent by the invalid in an effort at physical renovation. He rests, makes little exertion of any kind, confines himself to strict diet and the mildest of exercise, and returns to some extent to the tranquillity of hermetic speculation. He visits Boston and Lenox, and communes with Horace Mann, Hawthorne, the Peabodys, the Lowells, and the Winthrops, and in Concord finds "Ralph Waldo Emerson and his oracle, Mr. Alcott," and converses about the mystics. The President's proclamation of emancipation comes to hand early in October, and is characterized in the diary as "the most important paper that has emanated from this government since the foundation of the Constitution." On Nov. 15th General Hitchcock was appointed by the President to be Commissioner for the Exchange of Pris-



oners, and for the next three years this was his principal duty, though intermitted with that of counsellor at headquarters, and assignments to courts-martial, in which latter service he had made more comprehensive studies and attained wider experience than any other living American officer.

"New York, Nov. 26, 1862. Received at 10 o'clock yesterday evening a telegram from Washington with orders to repair thither to sit on a general court-martial which meets to-morrow for the trial of General Fitz-John Porter, on charges presented by General Pope.

"Washington, Nov. 28. Several members being still absent, court-martial adjourned till to-day . . . . Yesterday saw Secretary Stanton. Very cordially received. Told me to consider his private office my head-quarters. Dined with him at 5 P.M. General Halleck shew me a very remarkable letter from the President to McClellan, urging him in the strongest terms to cross the Potomac after the battle of Antietam and attack the enemy at Winchester."

The duties of Commissioner of Exchange are very exacting. Scores of letters have to be answered every day—many of them after consultation with Secretary Stanton or the President—complaining letters, censorious letters, begging letters, flattering and wheedling letters, letters of remonstrance and expostulation, letters of pathetic appeal in behalf of loved ones in prison, sternly patriotic letters, many of them being freighted with warning and information. Besides all this and the court-martial of General Porter ("he ought to be shot," says the diarist), he is now president of a board to revise the Army Regulations—work which he has previously had a hand in. Concerning this he solicits suggestions from officers throughout the country.

During the McDowell court of inquiry, General Hitchcock (now called "Advising General of the War Department") gave testimony all of one day bearing strongly against the military fidelity of General McClellan, and consisting largely of orders and letters from President Lincoln, and a repetition of his oral opinion that McClellan should not take away so much of the army as to imperil Washington. General Hitchcock said: "I have attached very great importance to the

possession of Washington, not so much as a military point, but from its political position. It is the capital of the United States. The government is here. The archives of the nation are all here. It is the depository of the original Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution of the United States. It is the residence of the foreign ministers. These and many similar considerations give to this city a peculiar character. Its possession by the enemy, even for a short time, would injure the cause of the country more than the loss of many battles at a distance."

"Washington, Jan. 29, '63. . . . A few days ago Mr. George Bancroft, historian, with Governor Andrew of Mass., and Congressman Hooper, called on me. Mr. Bancroft made it evident that he called to recognize the author of *Christ the Spirit*.

"Washington, Feb. 14. Received this morning complete sheets, unbound, of the story of the *Red Book of Appin*, with its interpretation, together with four other stories to which I have given a few hints as aids to the student. It is certainly curious to discover among fairy tales many purely hermetic stories written by men who were not tempted to jeopardize their liberty by writing ostentatiously. They are, without, for children in a physical sense, but inwardly they are for the children of Light."

These studies of hermetic meanings in the ancient tales he tells us "do not interfere in the least" with his public duties. He serves on several courts-martial. He attends to the military part of Mr. Lincoln's correspondence, writing some scores of letters a day—about battles and army movements, about applications for discharge and exchange of prisoners, and about the thousand various complaints and applications that annoyed the tender-hearted President. In April he stirred up General Halleck and Secretary Stanton to the imminent danger that the rebels might retake Norfolk, which, he declared, would be "an overwhelming disgrace." A counter movement of Union troops and gunboats was at once set on foot. At this time the President was exceedingly agitated over Hooker's losses at Chancellorsville. Presently all eyes were turned hopefully towards the army moving to



intercept Lee, and towards Grant surrounding Vicksburg. Under date of May 22, 1863, the diary:

"I cannot sleep. Had a most uncomfortable night thinking of Grant's army. Cannot help anticipating bad news from Vicksburg—and if bad at all, it is likely to be very bad.

"Sunday, May 24. Secretary Stanton complained to me this morning that the President would not listen to his advice or to that of Halleck, the General-in-Chief, or to that of Heintzelman in charge of the defences of Washington. This is a bad state of things. Halleck told me the same thing some days ago. The Secretary speaks quite sharply of the disposition of the President to interfere with the course of legitimate orders and referred to his refusal to listen to his and my advice. Not that the President is not Commander-in-Chief—but he ought to listen to the counsel of the General responsible for the military defence of the city and army, and not follow blindly: but he will not listen to any of us and has given Hooker orders as his only senior, passing by Halleck as if he were not here. Hooker's army is not equal to the duties expected of it, and Lee may move—possibly into Pennsylvania if he cannot come to this city."

While at Annapolis on court-martial, General Hitchcock received from the President the correspondence of Lieutenant-Colonel Ludlow and the rebel Commissioner Ould, as to the safety of the Union men whose lives had been threatened by the rebel government in alleged retaliation for the execution of two spies in Burnside's department, and he endorsed:

"I am of the opinion that, while it was proper to justify Colonel Ludlow in writing his letter threatening retaliation should the rebels carry out their threat, the letter being calculated to check them, still I would on no account follow their savage example. If they choose, in the South, to act as barbarians, we, in the North, ought not to do so. The practice proposed by the rebel government is not simply an offence against the laws of war, but an outrage upon civilization and humanity and cannot fail to call forth the condemnation of the historian and the execration of mankind. The U. S. Government is clearly right in the execution of the spies, even by the rebel statement of the facts, and it may be



possible to reach the authors of the proposed criminal retaliation by a vigorous prosecution of the war."

The court was transferred to Baltimore on June 11th. The air was filled with rumors of the advance of Lee into Maryland. As General Hitchcock had anticipated just after the battle of Chancellorsville, the rebel commander had assumed a formidable aggressive.

"Baltimore, July 5, 1863. Last Monday night the bells of this city rang the alarm and the guards turned out for defence. It was about 10 and I had retired for the night. Before the bells rang Gen. Dan. Tyler gave a long rap at my door and waked me. On my opening the door he told me in a rapid stream of talk that the enemy was within seven miles and I had better get up—and away he went. I did not believe that any dangerous body was so near and to bed again I went. Presently General Morrell knocked. Up I got again and we talked over the probabilities. He shortly went away and I took to my bed again and let the alarm bells ring themselves tired. I had been in the midst of alarms in Mexico, and had not forgotten how readily I got up. . . . The battle of Gettysburg has probably been the bloodiest as it is the most important of this war. Will Lee be able to save himself?"

## CHAPTER LVII

A FAMOUS COURT-MARTIAL. THE CASHELL CASE. REBUKE TO STANTON. REMARKABLE MAGNANIMITY

NOW (1863) occurred an episode in the war which came perilously near causing a permanent breach between General Hitchcock and Secretary Stanton. The former had presided at a court-martial which arraigned and tried one Cashell, a Marylander, for giving intelligence to the enemy. The specifications were that Cashell pointed out to a body of rebel cavalry the direction in which a large lot of cattle belonging to the United States, out at pasture, had been driven in order to avoid being captured by the said cavalry, and that the said Cashell also informed the said cavalry that the cattle were without the protection of a guard. The court found Cashell guilty of both specifications and of the charge, but, as the intelligence did not seem to have been given voluntarily or with a criminal design, "The court thereupon affixes no penalty to the offence beyond an admonition that, in future, he will be more on his guard in answering inquiries addressed to him by an enemy."

It will not seem strange that a sentence so astonishing received attention at the War Department. Mr. Stanton seized upon it with much avidity. He approved the findings, disapproved the sentence, and peremptorily dissolved the court, superseding it by another to try pending cases, and handed over the offender to a civil tribunal to be tried for treason! He declared that "the information communicated was most important to the enemy; that it was given voluntarily, without threat or persuasion"; that it was "an offence which under the Articles of War is punishable with death," and that for such a trivial sentence "there is believed to be no precedent."

General Hitchcock, as usual, immediately assumed entire responsibility for the sentence and assailed its assailant in language for which there is believed to be no precedent—at least in the American army. His printed *Remarks* begin thus:

“Whether the order in the case of Cashell originated with the Secretary of War or was provided for his signature in some adjacent office, is unknown to the writer of these remarks. Whatever the fact may be on this point, the order, appearing over the signature of the Secretary, can only be treated as having proceeded from him; but the following remarks are made under the admission that the vast machinery of the War Office requires the labor of many assistants, distributed through many bureaus, among whom individuals may be found, drawn from civil life, who are in no sense qualified to revise the proceedings of courts-martial.”

General Hitchcock then quotes the oath taken by members of military courts to do justice “without partiality, favor, or affection,” and declares that the intention was to place such courts “above all attempts at dictation or intimidation from those in power. There can be no greater outrage, therefore,” he proceeds to say, “than such an attempt at intimidation; and yet such a purpose is manifest in the above order.

“Looking at the oath of members of courts-martial, it is plain that the order of the Secretary in the case of Cashell is not merely a disapproval of the proceedings of the court on open grounds of law and reason, according to usage and custom, but it is a direct attack upon that independence of courts-martial which the law contemplates, and which is manifestly necessary for the attainment of impartial justice through a military tribunal.

“The new court to be assembled under this intimidating order must meet under the feeling that the Secretary of War expects or requires it to escape his censure by going further, in its verdict, than the court whose proceedings are condemned in the order. The new court, therefore, if accessible to influences of this sort, must be expected not to do justice according to their ‘consciences, the best of their understanding, and the custom in like cases,’ but they must decide according



to what they may happen to imagine may be agreeable to the wishes of the Secretary of War!"

General Hitchcock then makes the point that a revising officer can legally "pardon or mitigate" the sentence of a court-martial, but cannot increase it: that, as books on martial law declare, he "may either cause it to be put into execution, mitigate or remit it, but he cannot substitute a different punishment from that awarded by the court, nor can he, in any respect, add to the punishment or even alter the particular manner in which the court may have directed it to be carried into effect." In support of this contention he quotes at length from books on court-martial practice, and holds that any permanent violation of this practice would deprive courts-martial of respectability and bring them into contempt.

"It is an outrage upon decency and common sense to suppose that a whole court, or even a majority of it, can wilfully err either on a point of law or in a case appealing to a natural sense of justice. . . . There is no power on earth which has the right to say of a court-martial, in its character as a jury, that it has not meted out to an accused party a sufficient penalty, where that penalty has been by law left to the court."

General Hitchcock now sums up the evidence itself, and shows that it proved that the farmer, Cashell, gave such correct advice to the herdsmen sent by the government to bring off the 1000 head of cattle as resulted in their being saved from capture; that he gave no information to the rebel cavalry pursuing them except under duress; that the information he gave as to the road the cattle had taken was of no consequence, because the footprints of the drove fully betrayed it and "a lie was useless"; that he stated that drovers only were with them "in reply to direct and pointed questions, having, perhaps, both his life and property in jeopardy, and most likely without the presence of mind of one habituated to diplomatic falsehood." Thence General Hitchcock proceeds:

"The revising authority falsifies this evidence—makes a declaration directly contrary to the sworn statement of the two witnesses (called by the prosecution) on this point—

and arbitrarily condemns a whole court, mainly, it must be presumed, upon this perversion of the truth.

“In this view let the revising officer consider what the judgment of the court must be upon himself! Let him change places with the court for a moment, and he would find it difficult, with his temper sufficiently manifested in the order, to discover language equal to the expression of his indignation. This direct departure from the truth must, in charity, be attributed to an oversight—to a hasty and careless misreading of the record; but it has all the effects of design, and how can a public officer excuse himself for the commission of so serious an error—by accident? If not thus accounted for, there can be no defence whatever for this unprecedented proceeding. . . .

“Whether the penalty prescribed in the case was precisely what another court might have ordered, is not here the question. The penalty, such as it was, proceeded from a legally constituted court, empowered and required to give an opinion in the case, and entitled to protection from an insulting dissent from the revising officer.

“In view of such facts who will dare to say that a crime had been committed deserving the penalty of death, as is clearly intimated in the order? Such an opinion could have originated only in a bloodthirsty disposition, thoroughly poisoned in the root of its humanity!

“Officers of the army are open to conviction on matters of fact; but in matters of conscience it is hoped they will ever be above extraneous influences, and especially beyond the reach of language assuming an arrogant, dictatorial or threatening character. . . . The order in the case of Cashell has been published in the *Army and Navy Official Gazette*, by direction of the Secretary of War, and there it now stands an ineffaceable memorial of the impalement upon public opinion which a hasty act of the present incumbent of the War Department has inflicted upon his own reputation. . . . When will public men understand that violence does not carry the day, but that all genuine power moves in the same sphere with truth and reason?”

Of this extraordinary arraignment of the Secretary of War, General Hitchcock printed only a few copies for the members



of the court and some particular friends, but the purport of it became rapidly known in an ever-widening circle.

He sent a copy to his friend Dr. W. T. Harris, of St. Louis, covered by a letter in which he said:

"Army discipline has made necessary a regulation forbidding officers to bring into public discussion the acts of their superiors. If private griefs could be carried into the newspapers, the army would soon become a bear-garden. But I know of no reason why I may not explain to my friends how I view an order which reflects severely upon my judgment or my fidelity. You will please be careful that no one sees this on whose prudence you cannot perfectly rely. I consider myself right now; I must not go wrong by even seeming to attack the executive officers of the government at a time like this, though merely as an act of self-defence. Mr. Stanton has either been misled or has grossly forgot himself, and I am much mistaken or he will one of these days deeply regret this departure from both truth and official propriety."

Such an arraignment could scarcely be kept wholly secret. Some hints of its purport resulted in great excitement throughout the country. The *New York Herald* said:

"A brochure of General Hitchcock's, commenting upon the order of the Secretary of War dissolving the court-martial of which General Hitchcock was president, is producing considerable excitement in military circles. Only about a dozen copies were printed for the use of particular friends. It is said to be one of the most scathing and sarcastic articles ever written. It absolutely flays the Secretary alive. Much astonishment is expressed at the fact that, notwithstanding this publication, the third tendered resignation of General Hitchcock has not been accepted, but he is still retained on duty at the War Department as the military adviser of the Secretary."

It was, indeed, true. General Hitchcock was retained as close as possible to the Secretary and the President, spending much of his time with each. He wrote orders at their suggestion, answered letters requiring military knowledge, endeavored to effect further exchange of prisoners of war, received military officers and helped to despatch the business which brought them to head-quarters, and in all ways continued to make his skill and experience auxiliary to the fer-



vent and anxious patriotism of the two great civilians at the head of affairs. Several hot weeks of this sanguinary summer passed, and the Secretary had not said a word to General Hitchcock concerning his insubordinate protest.

“Washington, Sept. 24. I make very few notes—have made few since the war began. I go to my duties in the War Office at 9 or 10 in the morning and remain usually till 4 or 5 o'clock—sometimes much later—and am ready at all times to do what I can in the great cause of free government which is bound up in the success of the North in putting down this rebel attempt to establish a slaveocracy. In the midst of tremendous public events I say but little of them, while at times I pass whole nights almost literally without sleep in anxious consideration of the course of events.

“Washington, Sept. 30, 1863. Yesterday, after getting through my morning's business with the Secretary, I turned to leave his office when, as if the thought had just struck him, Mr. Stanton said, ‘I wish you would give me one of your pamphlets on the Cashell case.’

“This was the first allusion he had ever made to the ‘Order.’ I at once turned back and took a seat, for I had determined if he spoke to me about it to give him a piece of my mind. I did so. Mr. Stanton knows that I am not afraid of him and so he is never rough with me as he is with many. His request was in a mild and gentle tone, as if he were entirely free from passion.

“I told him then that I had prepared my statement of the case for my friends and not for the public, etc., etc. I so far excused him from responsibility for his order as was involved in the fact, which I was well aware of, that he himself had never seen the proceedings of the court or the evidence in the Cashell case—that the statement of the case had been prepared by some one who had abused his confidence, etc.

“He said that he wished me to understand that his order did not apply to any individual of the court. I told him that it applied to the whole court and I was a member of it.

“He said he had been given to understand that I did not unite in the opinion of the court. I told him that no one out of the court knew the opinion of any member, and that all members were sworn not to disclose the vote of any.

“ ‘But suppose,’ I said, without admitting or asserting anything on this point, ‘that some one member dissented from the opinion of the court;—there are two forms of dissent: one that the court had not gone far enough, and another that it had gone too far. How would such a member, in either case, be affected by the order? If he thought the sentence too severe, he must think the order all the more exceptionable; if he thought it not severe enough, he would be innocent in the view of the revising officer, and yet would suffer under the condemnation of the whole court.’

“Our talk ended by my telling him that, as he had opened the subject, which I could not do, I would send him the pamphlet; but I warned him that there were some sharp things in it. He kept his temper, simply saying, ‘Well, send it to me.’ And I send it this morning, with a note explaining my immediate object in writing it.<sup>1</sup>

“Now we shall see how much magnanimity he has, and whether he can do an act of justice by an act implying that he has made an error himself. He must do one of two things: either make some acknowledgment of error, and some attempt at reparation, or fly into a passion and do another wrong.

“When I first saw the order in the Cashell case it struck me that it must, in some way, make a breach between the Secretary and myself, ending in my retirement from the service (voluntarily or otherwise), for, although I felt that I was in the right and the Secretary in the wrong, he has the power.

“Mr. Stanton is not what I call a man of reason: hence it is impossible for those of us who are about him and obliged to meet him daily ever to know where to find him. He has no general principles of action. He decides a point one way one day, and, a week later, forgetting his decision, and having no definite principle to go by, he decides the same point another way. He authorizes a particular proceeding, and, within a week perhaps, the circumstances being exactly the same, he flies into a passion with some one for having fol-

<sup>1</sup> In his note of enclosure General Hitchcock said that the Secretary's order stigmatized the members of the court as incompetent, arraigned them as unjust, and attacked them as disloyal.



lowed his first decision. These outbreaks have for their victims generally a few individuals against whom, without any cause, he has conceived some prejudice. I have never allowed him to break out on me. When I have seen a tendency towards it, I have invariably put on an air of firmness and decision which has checked him. He has been afraid of offending me. Now I am ready for anything he chooses. I am ready to retire to civil life. I wish this rebellion crushed, but my usefulness here is diminished, if not neutralized, by the character and temperament of the Secretary of War, with whom I am obliged to act."

This somewhat embittered comment is the end of a remarkable episode; and this fact shows that General Hitchcock did not do justice to the reasonableness or the magnanimity of the great Secretary. The remonstrance had been expressed in terms of severity, almost of violence and defiance, rarely employed towards a superior officer in war times, but it was never again mentioned between them.

Secretary Stanton was a nervous, irascible, overworked man, impulsive, easily annoyed, wearied, worried, sick at all times, his early death already predicted by his physicians, and bearing the burden of a nation's troubles. His days were filled with awful anxieties; his nights were sleepless and distressed. But he did possess underlying principles of justice to which, at the last, he always had recourse. His bold critic was not dismissed the service nor was his resignation accepted, and their friendly intercourse was never again interrupted.

The fact that the Secretary was capable of forgiving such a severe indictment of himself and of his intentions proves that he was magnanimous and essentially just.

Indeed, there is a possible explanation of the precipitate repudiation of the "sentence" which does not seem to have occurred to General Hitchcock. The Secretary had been told that the president of the court did not approve of the sentence, and he entertained so high an idea of that officer's justice and learning that he hastily annulled the sentence, supposing, for that very reason, that it was wrong.



## CHAPTER LVIII

REFUSAL OF SOUTH TO EXCHANGE PRISONERS. CARTEL VIOLATED. QUESTION OF RETALIATION. CHARACTERIZATION OF BUTLER. ESTIMATE OF McCLELLAN. "ALL WELL WITH GRANT." EXULTATION OF HITCHCOCK. THE CAPITAL IN PERIL. SAVED BY HITCHCOCK'S INSISTENCE

**D**URING the last half of 1863, the loyal States were filled with an indignant clamor for "retaliation" on the ground that the Union prisoners in Richmond were kept in a state of semi-starvation. General Hitchcock did his utmost, in every way, to mitigate the condition of the sufferers, but he always opposed "retaliation in kind," as being uncivilized. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote him at this time (Nov. 20, 1863) warmly approving his remonstrance.<sup>1</sup>

The winter of 1863-64 is memorable for the persistent violation of the agreed-upon cartel by the rebels and their refusal to exchange prisoners of war in accordance with its provisions. The victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg had given us a mass of prisoners largely in excess of the number

"I suppose this killing of our men by hunger was incidental, not designed. There was famine in Richmond, and the hungry people helped themselves where they could, and the prisoners suffered first, because there was nobody to defend their rights. In that case, we have already found a right, though difficult, remedy,—of sending provisions to our men there. Without clearest evidence of malicious purpose on their part, it would be hideous to retaliate by killing prisoners even in the shortest way.

"Meantime it seems to me that too much inquiry into and proclamation of the facts cannot be made, as it is the most effective war-cry that has yet been raised, and should send a larger levy than the President has ordered down to Richmond to open the doors of the Libby prison before Christmas. I hate to write in haste and inconsiderately as I am now forced to do on so grave a question, but was alarmed to learn that I had been made to speak much more inconsiderately in the report to you. . . .

"With great respect and regard, yours,

"R. W. EMERSON."

held by the rebels, whereupon they refused to exchange on terms of equality, or to exchange the 5000 colored troops in their hands on any terms whatever. Instead of exchanging them, they had the audacity to put them at work upon the fortifications at Mobile! This excited the rage and disgust of Mr. Lincoln and no further exchanges were made for many months. Every effort was put forth by General Hitchcock, now the U. S. Commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners, to induce the rebels to do as they had agreed, but in vain. They even refused to consider white officers of colored regiments as exchangeable, but threatened to hold them for trial for "exciting servile insurrection."

General Butler at Fortress Monroe expressed publicly the opinion that he could effect the exchange of prisoners if the duty were transferred from General Hitchcock to himself and, as there was in the newspapers a good deal of scolding at the Federal authorities because the exchange of prisoners had stopped, General Hitchcock wrote (Dec. 3, 1863) to Secretary Stanton:

"As there seems to be an impression in the minds of some that our prisoners in Richmond might be relieved through the agency of some other officers than those now acting, I beg leave to say that, so far as I am concerned, I should be happy to have the experiment made if, in your judgment, you suppose anything can be done to accomplish so desirable an object. I would not, upon any consideration in the world, be supposed to stand in the way of any arrangement which might promise relief to the sufferers in Richmond prison. I am perfectly willing either to withdraw altogether or to be set aside temporarily for the trial of any experiment which meets your approval."

The following reply was received within an hour:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY,  
Dec. 3, 1863.

"DEAR SIR: I do not believe that the business of exchange can be conducted by any one so well as by yourself, and therefore can by no means consent to relieve you from a duty you have so well discharged and to my entire satisfaction.

"Yours truly,

"EDWIN M. STANTON,  
"Sec. of War."

But the Secretary went so far as to make General Butler a local agent for exchange, and General Hitchcock was sent down to see him and specifically define his duties. With the self-assertion and aggressiveness characteristic of him, General Butler at once magnified his office, and launched out in general orders signed "B. F. Butler, Commissioner of Exchange." This was in no way resented, because it was hoped that he might have some of the success which he promised. In this all were disappointed. Exchange came to an official as well as a practical standstill by the final announcement from the South that Butler was an "outlaw" and would not be recognized. This was on account of his famous "Order No. 28" at New Orleans, which has long since received the thoughtful approval of the civilized world.

Several times during this winter General Hitchcock went to City Point, communicated with General Butler and Judge Ould, and earnestly endeavored to induce the rebel government to comply in the interest of humanity with the cartel it had signed, but the result was very meagre. Thousands of officers and men died on both sides in consequence of the cruel conduct of Davis's government.

On Feb. 10, 1864, General Butler, who had failed to reopen the exchange of prisoners though having full power, telegraphed to Secretary Stanton charging that, in the correspondence which had resulted from this condition of things, General Hitchcock had been guilty of "disingenuousness," "gross misrepresentation," and other offences. The Secretary handed the despatch to General Hitchcock, who calmly reviewed the facts, showed that his statement was exactly correct, and added:

"That he [General Butler] should descend to the use of vulgar language in the gross accusations he has dared to level against me is wholly unbecoming his rank and position, though entirely in keeping with his pretty well established character for insolence and impudent brutality."

In reply to General Butler's suggestion that General Hitchcock desired notoriety, the latter said: "His letter can only show his own overweening anxiety to parade his own name before the public. No vulgar love of newspaper notoriety tyrannizes over my disposition, to impede its action in



behalf of suffering humanity. . . . General Butler himself will recollect that when the subject of his position as exchange agent was spoken of in the War Office, in the presence of the President, the Secretary of War, and the General-in-Chief, after it became known that the rebel authorities had given notice that they would not do business with him, and that even a flag of truce should not protect him, I then expressed the opinion that the rebels should not be allowed to say who should or should not be appointed to execute the duties of this government."

The writer accused General Butler of intercepting and opening his letters and of otherwise conducting himself in ways not customary among gentlemen. He then asked that the Secretary of War should send a copy of his letter to General Butler. This was their last correspondence. Secretary Stanton countermanded the order which General Hitchcock had protested against, and General Grant dismissed General Butler from his command.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebel authorities seized Union men (farmers, etc.) on their occasional raids into Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, as well as in the Southern States, and held them prisoners in Richmond. They made repeated proposals having for their object the exemption of all men from arrest for treason, and "virtually the recognition of the Southern Confederacy," and declared that they would not release or exchange a single state prisoner till this demand was yielded to. This caused permanent delay and continual suffering.

General Hitchcock wrote a letter to General Grant, dated April 16, 1864, explaining in detail the arbitrary violation of the cartel by the South, "ignoring entirely our just claims upon the rebels for more Federal prisoners than all they then held in Southern prisons," and containing the following sentence:

"If to insist upon our just claims in this matter has seemed to operate unfavorably upon our officers and men in Southern prisons by subjecting them to cruel hardship, the imposition of which is a disgrace to the rebel authorities, it should be considered,

<sup>1</sup> And General Hitchcock so remembered the offence that he refused to take General Butler's hand a year later at the funeral of Mr. Lincoln.

on the other hand, that to allow the rebel agent undisputed license in his proceedings not only puts in jeopardy all hope of just action from him in the future, but has thrown into the rebel ranks full twenty thousand if not twenty-five thousand men, who ought to be on parole, to fight Federal troops, whose lives are thus exposed individually, while the public cause is also endangered—points which are undoubtedly entitled to the protection of the government.”

For more than two years the exchange had been almost entirely suspended. The cartel agreed on in 1861, between General Dix and the rebel commissioner, was not technically repudiated, but the rebels had imposed on it new conditions. They insisted that colored troops would not be exchanged, but would be held in slavery, and that their officers would be handed over to the Southern States in which they were captured to be tried and punished as criminals!

After Vicksburg and Port Hudson Grant and Banks had paroled 40,000 prisoners, whereupon the rebel Secretary of War summoned them to meet at Enterprise, Miss., and there he issued an order declaring large numbers of them properly exchanged and put them into the rebel armies of the West. To crown these outrages the rebel authorities refused to exchange any more prisoners “man for man” according to the cartel, but would only give two prisoners for three! This quite locked the prisons on both sides and enormously increased the suffering.

General Pope wrote bitterly of General McClellan at this time, and in one of his answers General Hitchcock says: “McClellan was an engineer rather than a leader of armies. . . . McClellan’s entire merit consisted in organizing the freshly raised troops as they arrived here in the beginning of the war. The moment he attempted to handle the troops he proved himself entirely unequal to the task. I hope this is the worst that can be said of him, for it is painful to suspect anything beyond that.”<sup>1</sup> In the early spring of 1864, William Swinton prepared “The Exposure of McClellan” in a series of remarkable articles in the New York

<sup>1</sup> And when, shortly afterwards, Sheridan was appointed to succeed McClellan as Major-General, General Hitchcock indorsed it, “A severe comment by contrast.”



*Times*, and General Hitchcock was the military authority consulted in their preparation.<sup>1</sup>

The battle-summer of 1864 was a season of almost sleepless solicitude in Washington. The air was filled, day after day, with contradictory reports from every quarter. The city itself was menaced. Grant's great army was in constant peril, but it was the hope of the nation.

"Washington, May 6, 1864. A rumor circulates that Grant 'moved' yesterday. He may almost be said to have the fate of the government in his hands—200,000 men with their faces towards Richmond. Vast consequences depend, equal, almost, to those involved in the great battles between Charles Martel and the Saracens.

"May 8, 3.45 o'clock A.M. In deep suspense. War Department silent all day yesterday. I cannot sleep. I cannot read.

"What news shall I hear in the morning? I saw the Secretary about 11 yesterday morning, and I noticed that, in reaching for a piece of paper, his fingers showed a nervous tremor which I never observed before. Had he received some sign of failure on the part of Grant? The nation is in a struggle for its life. God grant it be not throttled!"

Weeks were now spent at the War Department, almost silently and breathlessly, waiting and praying for news—from Banks, from Sigel, from Sherman and Thomas, but especially from Grant.

"May 11, 1.30 A.M. Went to the War Department building a few minutes since. All quiet. Secretary had left. We cannot help feeling uneasy. Colonel Hardee had no news for me, except that Grant seemed to be fighting every day.

"May 18. Grant fought a battle every day for a week—a great series of encounters. . . . I could not endure the exposure of a campaign for a month. I felt this when I declined the commission I now hold, which the Secretary

<sup>1</sup> Swinton, writing on March 19th, says: "I have drawn so copiously from your 'notes' that the sixth article, in to-day's paper, is little else than a transcript from your MS. In the seventh, also, I have made free with the very valuable material which you were kind enough to place in my hands."



of War insisted on my accepting notwithstanding. When the commission was sent to me I was ordered to the command of the troops under General Grant operating against Forts Henry and Donelson. As Grant and his associate officers had had everything to do in raising, equipping, and disciplining the troops, I felt that it would be unjust to step in over them, in addition to the sense I had of my disabilities from ill health and advancing years. I declined the commission therefore. I was right. I rejoice now that I had strength to resist the instigations of pride and leave Grant to continue uninterruptedly in his path of glory. His name is now the most honored of any in the nation. I thank God I do not envy him, but rejoice that the country finds in him an able commander."

This self-gratulation at having refused the order which might have deprived the Union army of its greatest general reappears at different points in the diary, and the fullest confidence is expressed during these months by such exultant phrases as "Nothing can stop Grant!" "Grant has the conquering spirit." "General Halleck to-day showed me a cipher despatch from the front. All well with Grant!" And, at last, "We can now sleep again."

"July 6, 1864. The enemy (Jubal Early) appeared at Harper's Ferry last Saturday ('t is now Wednesday), and even yet we do not know in precisely what force. Sigel has been surprised at Martinsburg. We have only 15,000 men for the defence of Washington, and they are largely raw recruits. An enterprising general could take the city.

"I broached this danger last week to General Halleck. I asked him if he was satisfied with the security of the Shenandoah Valley. His answer was, substantially, that General Grant and not himself was responsible. This did not at all satisfy me. I asked him what reports he had from scouts from the Valley. He answered, I thought abruptly, that he never employed scouts!

"I thought this very extraordinary. A few days later, when Early's presence was reported, I went to General Halleck again and not only received no satisfaction, but was distinctly told that if he were in the President's place he would not order General Grant to send reinforcements here. I then went

to Mr. Stanton. He was not able to give me any information and said but little.

"Then I went to the President. I found him at his usual seat, surrounded with papers and many members of Congress in attendance.

"I did not sit, but leaned over the table at which the President sat and said, rather abruptly, 'I have just seen General Halleck. Is it possible,' I continued, 'that he can be under the influence of any painful feeling on account of the appointment over him of General Grant?' I added that, although Early was on the Potomac near this city, General Halleck seemed very apathetic.

" 'That's his way,' said Mr. Lincoln; 'he is always apathetic.'

"We had some further talk about it, the President seeming not to see the need of any assistance, when I looked in his eye, leaning forward on the table, and said:

" 'If Stonewall Jackson were living, and in command of Early's troops, in my opinion, sir, he would be in Washington in three days.'

"Mr. Lincoln was very much struck with the expression of such an opinion, and said he guessed something ought to be done. 'I'll speak to the Secretary of War about it,' he said and I took leave of him.

"July 28. Halleck told me, some days after Early had been driven away from the front of the capital, that the President had after my call telegraphed a 'request' to General Grant to send some troops for the defence of the capital, and that General Grant sent hurriedly part of the 6th and part of the 19th corps. The force reached here just in time.

"Early crossed the Potomac, and then—drunken fool that he was,—instead of striking at once for this undefended city he went up into Pennsylvania and burnt Chambersburg and delayed his attack on Washington till Wright was here, ready to defend it. I consider that my earnest intervention with the President saved this city from capture by Early's army. Perhaps he gave more weight to my opinion now because, in 1862, he ignored my advice not to weaken Banks in the Shenandoah Valley, and his refusal to accept my opinion had cost us an overwhelming defeat."

## CHAPTER LIX

GREAT NEWS FROM SHERIDAN. SALUTE OF 100 GUNS. INSPECTION OF PRISONERS ON LAKE ERIE. SHERMAN "A REAL GENERAL." PERSONAL LETTERS FROM SAVANNAH

NOTWITHSTANDING the tremendous anxiety constantly prevailing at the War Office and the White House, General Hitchcock, even in this troubled summer, acquires again something of his former serenity of soul, and enters earnestly on a study of the hermetic character of Shakespeare's sonnets, wherefrom, presently, grows a book, more specifically alluded to elsewhere. He also makes a re-examination at this time of the romantic chivalry stories of the mythical Palmerin and Amadis of Gaul. At every step he discovers a hermetic reading under the superficial text of antique narrative. Many fairy tales reveal also a hidden intent, and even the *Arabian Nights Entertainment* is found to be a repository of serious knowledge and a revelation of man's nature and destiny not before suspected. The General laments that, at his age, he will not have time to make a full explanation.

"Sandusky, O., Sept. 24, 1846. Great news from Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley! If he meets with no disaster his success will in all probability lead to the fall of Richmond. While thus rejoicing last Tuesday ('t is now Saturday) I received a message calling me to the Secretary of War, and, as I entered his office, he said quite abruptly that he wished me to go to Johnson's Island in Sandusky Harbor, where we had nearly 3000 rebel officers, prisoners of war. He showed me a despatch from Buffalo reporting that some rebels from Canada had seized two steamers at Bass Island. He had telegraphed to Johnson's Island but could get no answer. I started at once, travelled all night, and learned in the morning at



Pittsburg that the rebel scheme had apparently failed, one of the conspirators having been arrested. There I received a despatch from Secretary Stanton: 'Please make thorough inspection as to defence, the condition of the forces, the vigilance and qualifications of commanders, and whatever pertains to security, efficiency, and good of the service.' I hurried forward. Two steamers with thirty conspirators aboard came off this harbor, but, not seeing the signal lights agreed on, had been beached and abandoned. The man arrested is very much frightened and has disclosed the whole plot. He says that Jacob Thompson (Buchanan's Secretary of the Interior—the traitor villain) has been endeavoring to organize parties to seize steamers on the lakes with which to liberate the rebel prisoners and then burn such cities as they could. After considering the matter deliberately, I sent the following despatch to Mr. Stanton yesterday:

“ ‘SANDUSKY, Sept. 23, 1864.

“ ‘EDWIN M. STANTON,

“ ‘*Secretary of War.*

“ ‘SIR: I am of opinion that the safety of our commerce on the northern lakes and the security of their cities make it of the highest importance, if not indispensable, that the government should have several armed vessels fully manned to prevent the rebels from seizing steamers and converting them into war vessels, with a few of which they may do us incalculable mischief. Ex-Secretary Thompson is employed in Canada in setting on foot expeditions against us of the most dangerous character. I earnestly recommend that no time be lost in putting afloat armed steamers upon Lake Ontario, and speedily upon the upper lakes also.

“ ‘E. A. HITCHCOCK.’ ”

The treaty of 1815, which confined the two governments to “one gun” each was mentioned as an obstacle, but General Hitchcock insisted that as war existed, and as “the English have so much sympathy with the rebels” that they have allowed the peace to be broken, the treaty ought not to be a barrier. Congress at once acted, ordering “six steam revenue cutters for service on the lakes”—and that episode was closed.

While on this service along the great lakes a correspond-

ence ensued with two rebel prisoners, abundantly explained by the following reply from the Commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners:

“JOHNSON’S ISLAND, Sept. 24, 1864.

“COLONELS HOLMAN AND WOODS.

“GENTLEMEN: In answer to your note of yesterday, proposing that, if I will allow you to purchase or receive provisions from your friends in the North, you will obligate yourselves to have delivered to any designated Federal officers now in confinement in the South double the amount of subsistence you may receive on this proposition, and the provisions shall not cost the Federal officers anything—I have to say that your proposal is accompanied with no security that, while the so-called Confederate government disregards alike the laws of war and humanity in the treatment of prisoners in their hands, it will respect the proposal you make so far as to permit it to be carried out. I therefore propose that, if you will induce your government to comply with those laws in the treatment of prisoners of war, and give us the evidence of it, you and all of your companions shall have full rations, including coffee and sugar, and the privilege of purchasing whatever other provisions you may desire.

“I take this occasion to inform you that your authorities issue but two ounces of meat and a small cup of corn meal ground with the cob, as the daily rations of a prisoner of war, with an occasional dish of soup made of wormy beans, the meat being issued irregularly and sometimes intermitted for whole days and even weeks. You need not be informed that with this allowance you are slowly murdering the helpless prisoners in your hands. We do not choose to follow your example.

“Any communication you may desire to send your government to carry out this proposal shall be sent through the lines if committed to me.

“Resp<sup>y</sup> your obd<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>,

“E. A. HITCHCOCK

“Maj.-Gen. Vols.”

The Colonels made no rejoinder.

General Hitchcock telegraphed for “further orders” and an order came in reply directing that 100 guns (12-pounders) be fired as a salute in honor of Sheridan’s victory, within hearing of the 2600 rebel prisoners. After this was done, he inspected the prisons at Columbus with General Heintzelman,

reviewed the troops on parade, and returned to Washington with several important additional recommendations, which Mr. Stanton endorsed and adopted. Good news along now—defeat of Hood by Thomas—Sherman entering Savannah—capture of Fort Fisher—Grant more than holding his own—Sheridan spreading dismay.

General Hitchcock brought back from Johnson's Island one piece of most important news; out of 1882 rebel prisoners of war, only 362 were willing to be exchanged! The residue preferred to remain in prison. This fact was a striking comment both on their lack of enthusiasm for the rebel cause and on their treatment in the "Yankee prison." On this the diarist comments:

"Who cannot see in the above fact the state of feeling that would be manifested in the whole rebel army if an opportunity were offered for declaring itself? Secession was one of those infatuations which sometimes seize large bodies of people, who need only a wholesome lesson to enable them to recover their senses and cast off their delusion as a horrid nightmare."

About this time, General Hitchcock's nephew, Mr. Henry Hitchcock, a prominent and prosperous lawyer of St. Louis, came to Washington, determined to go into the Union army in some capacity. Straightway his uncle introduced him to Secretary Stanton with the playful remark, "Here is a young fellow spoiling for a fight," and, as he was a lawyer, it was at once arranged he should have a commission under the Judge Advocate-General. General Sherman, then holding Atlanta, was at once written to and promptly (Sept. 22<sup>d</sup>) responded as follows:

"I knew Mr. Hitchcock very well at St. Louis. I have on my staff no judge advocate or provost marshal-general and have a vacancy as inspector-general, and would be most happy to have him in any one of these places for his own sake as well as on account of my great respect for General Hitchcock. If Mr. Hitchcock is commissioned as you propose, I will be most happy to have him assigned to me, and you may show this to the Secretary of War and he may construe it into an application for him. Though universally I have favored the appointment of young officers already



in the service, yet I esteem this case as one that may safely be made without endangering the rule.

W. T. SHERMAN,

*Major-General Commanding.*

COL. J. C. KELTON,

*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

The appointment was promptly made in response to the application, and Mr. Hitchcock at once joined the staff of General Sherman in the field with the rank of major.

When General Sherman had made his extraordinary march through the enemy's country General Hitchcock wrote him a letter of warm congratulation, which evoked two characteristic replies, as follows:

Head-quarters, Military Division of the Mississippi,

In the Field, SAVANNAH, Jan. 6, 1865.

GENERAL E. A. HITCHCOCK,

Washington, D. C.

DEAR GENERAL: Your flattering note of the 26th of Dec. came duly to hand. Though public censure or praise as conveyed in the press is alike offensive to me, the good opinion of real men is correspondingly acceptable. So that you may rest assured words of encouragement from men like you are very agreeable to me. I can yet hardly realize that events have pushed me into the responsible attitude of a general; yet having commanded a hundred thousand men in battle, and led them successfully across half a continent through a hostile country and in the face of hostile armies, I must, I suppose, accept it with all its risks and accidents.

You have been my friend through evil report and good report; and I hope that nothing will happen in the future to mar the satisfaction you express at the course of one who still leans on you and all good men for counsel and support. But of course occasions do arise when a general must act of himself almost without reflection, and then he must bear the consequences, good or bad—such was my case at Atlanta when Hood avoided me and forced me to divide my command to accomplish any real result. I think events have progressed far enough already to justify my conclusion. And I hope to make it still more fruitful of results.

Your nephew is with me now and is of infinite assistance. I have asked him to keep you advised of matters that may interest you, and hope in serving his country near me he will realize

his ardent desire to serve his country in this her period of trial. I shall ever account it an honor to hear from you.

"As ever your friend,

"W. T. SHERMAN,

"*Major-General.*"

"Head-quarters, Military Division of the Mississippi,

"In the Field, SAVANNAH, Jan. 9, 1865.

"GENERAL E. A. HITCHCOCK,

"Washington, D. C.

"DEAR GENERAL: I do not remember if I answered your last. If I did this letter is a duplicate, for I could no more than express the natural and proper gratification your letter conveyed. I feel more pride and satisfaction in what you notice, than in having foreseen the long and difficult struggle in which we are involved, or in any mental conception worked out afterwards in action, *viz.*, that early I gave my personal attention to instruct others, less favored than myself, in the details of our profession. I know that this war will demonstrate the truth that lasting military fame is not to be had by sudden and spontaneous action, but by long study, patient application of correct principles to the development of events, and hard work. If in these I have done well I shall feel more than rewarded in the approval of such judges as yourself.

"The military critics of the day pile on to me encomiums that will I fear embarrass me. I cannot realize that I am to be classed as a real general, and that my future is to be tested by comparisons with the European models, but I realize the fact that good and true men do lean on me in the hour of trial and danger, and repose a confidence resulting more from their personal knowledge of me than my new rank. I can look in the past and see occasions when I have manifested either prescience or good calculation but know that I do not possess the knowledge of history and law that would qualify me for high trusts.

"Your nephew Henry is of great use to me. He is a lawyer and scholar and can draw up my rude thoughts in better array, as well as lend me a hand in the voluminous work of the office. I never was much of an office man, and find myself daily more and more disinclined to write. Indeed, if I could honestly dodge I would gladly escape the dangers to which I find myself exposed.

"Truly your friend,

"W. T. SHERMAN,

"*Maj.-Gen. Commanding.*"

## CHAPTER LX

LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURATION. THE FALL OF RICHMOND.  
GRANT'S ADMIRABLE TERMS TO LEE. ASSASSINATION OF  
PRESIDENT. THE GUARD OF HONOR. CAPTURE OF JEF-  
FERSON DAVIS

THE winter was passed by General Hitchcock in various activities having for their end the reinforcement and re-equipment of the armies under Grant and Sherman, and a constant exchange of congratulations on account of the wonderful March to the Sea, the capture of Charleston, the reoccupation of Fort Sumter, the achievements of the navy without a defeat, and the brilliant prospects of the speedy capture of Richmond and the final defeat of Lee's army. General Hitchcock had never been more actively employed. He had now served for more than two years as United States Commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners, and as he had the responsibility he preferred to personally direct the important service. The exchanges had at first been interrupted and paralyzed by the action of the rebel government in refusing to exchange negro prisoners even for their own whites in our hands; our soldiers in rebel prisons suffered terribly for food and were refused permission to receive food from the North; then went far and wide the rage for reprisal and "retaliation in kind." Wade's retaliation resolutions came near passing the Senate. Sumner spoke vigorously against the project and sent his speech to General Hitchcock, who endorsed on it, "Sumner sends me two of these: I think it is because he knows I am of his opinion." Throughout the winter the Commissioner of Exchange used his utmost exertions to effect the renewal of civilized methods which the South had abandoned.



During these exciting and exhausting years General Hitchcock also served as Commissary-General of Prisoners. Seventy-five clerks were employed in his bureau and the accounts and records of more than 100,000 prisoners were continually kept.

Thus came the spring of 1865, bringing the reinauguration of President Lincoln.

“Washington, March 4, 1865, 10.30 A.M. It is raining: has been raining for two or three days and the streets of Washington were never in a worse condition—mud, mud, mud, everywhere. But the people move in throngs, preparing to witness the procession on the way to the capitol, where Abraham Lincoln is once more to be sworn in as President of the United States. Drums are beating near and remote; parties of citizens and regiments of soldiers are passing to their appointed places. Now and then a band passes, followed by a fire company, etc., etc.

“The weather is too bad for me to go out and see the parade, but I fully appreciate the importance of the occasion. The people have emphatically endorsed the policy of Mr. Lincoln, to restore the Union without slavery. A trumpet sounds under my window. Squadrons of cavalry halt opposite. A band is approaching from the west, no doubt leading another column. It is truly a great occasion. God grant that no accident happen!

“The rain holds up a little. If it should so far clear that the President may be inaugurated in the open air, under the canopy of heaven, instead of within the Capitol, it will be accepted as a good augury.

“1 P.M., and the guns have been firing, announcing that Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Johnson have taken the oath, and—sure enough! it has cleared off and the sun is out. Some poet must signalize this fact. I should almost be glad to be superstitious enough to believe it a special Providence. God save the republic! E. A. H.

“Washington, April 3. I was engaged in my office as usual when, about 10.30 A.M., I heard a hurrah, then another, then general cheers. I went to the window and heard the joyful cry go up ‘Richmond is taken!’ The city is wild with excitement; guns firing, bells ringing, streets crowded.

I went and congratulated Mrs. Stanton, and had a pleasant interview. Evening: Excitement continues. Bands playing. Rejoicing everywhere. In the city 300 guns fired for the capture of Petersburg and 500 for Richmond. The thirty or forty forts around the city were ordered to fire 100 guns each at 3 P.M. To-morrow evening, personal and official illumination.

“April 9. General Lee surrendered his army to General Grant to-day. Citizens were awakened by salutatory guns this morning. Stanton shew me yesterday a despatch from Grant saying that Lee would surrender to-day. I told him that Grant would not have sent such an announcement without strong grounds to go upon. Grant’s liberal terms to Lee are admirable.

“The only merit I have in connection with the rebellion is that of refusing to take important commands; and I refused because I did not feel sufficiently strong to assume the responsibility of a position involving the lives of hundreds and thousands of men, to say nothing of the cause which might have been put in jeopardy by my insufficiency.

“When the war broke out, General Scott desired to have me with him, as I had been with him in his campaign in Mexico, and he knew me; but —— withheld his consent because in 1838-9 I exposed his fraudulent treatment of the Winnebago Indians, while he was a commissioner under the government, appointed to do them justice. When he was got rid of Mr. Stanton immediately offered to me a major-general’s commission with orders to proceed to the army then under Brigadier-General U. S. Grant operating against Fort Donelson. While hesitating as to the propriety of taking a position over Grant, and assuming the command of troops which had been prepared for the field by himself and others, news came of the surrender of Fort Donelson to him. I then felt very deeply the duty of abstaining from interfering with the demonstrated successful career of the army under Grant. I determined to decline Mr. Stanton’s offer, which I had for some days held in suspense at the urgent request of General Halleck.

“The moment Mr. Stanton received my letter of declination of a major-general’s commission he sent me a cipher



telegram through Halleck asking me to come to Washington at once. I came. McClellan was then about to undertake his campaign on the isthmus, and, after he had sat down before Yorktown, Mr. Stanton urged me to allow him to give me an order to take the immediate command of McClellan's army—a law having been passed giving the President power to make special assignments without regard to dates of commission.

“Mr. Stanton told me that the President wished it and that if I would ‘say the word’ I should have the order ‘in two minutes.’ I at once refused. He had, on a previous occasion, actually written an order which was equivalent to putting me in command of the whole army, which I made him tear in pieces and throw in the fire. I rejoice that I had strength enough to refuse the invitation which would have placed me in the chief command of the army; and I am as ready to do honor to Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, and others as any man in the army.

“April 14, 1865. To-day the flag goes up on Sumter—replaced by Anderson. I was invited to participate in the ceremony, but I declined, pleading want of health; though, in fact, I wished to avoid jumping into a pleasure excursion when I have done so little hard work in the field. City greatly illuminated and decorated.

“April 14, 11.30 P.M. I had retired. A clerk opened my door and said, ‘General, the President has been killed to-night.’ ‘What?’ ‘Shot, they say, at Ford’s Theatre.’ ‘Great God! Can this be true?’ A few minutes later I was told that the President and General Grant had both been shot. Rose at once and went out.”

During this panic-stricken night, General Hitchcock did not again retire. He visited Secretary Seward and other members of the government who had been assailed and then went to the War Department and assisted in devising quick measures for the arrest of the conspirators and assassins. The prevalent excitement is reflected in the diary.

“April 18, 6.30 A.M. I have just left the Executive Mansion. The Secretary of War had desired a general officer to be near the body of Mr. Lincoln, and at his request General Eaton and I have been there since 6 o’clock last evening, and when



I have got a light breakfast I shall return and stay there till six to-night. Until 8 o'clock last evening the body had been on the second floor front, second room west of the portico. Then it had been embalmed and was placed in a coffin and taken to the East room (lower floor), where it now lies in state in the centre of the room, which, like the coffin, is draped in black.

"April 19, near 2 P.M. and the procession is to move from the President's mansion at 2, with the body, which is for two days to lie in state in the rotunda of the Capitol.

"During yesterday I was the senior officer of the guard of honor over the President's remains, with General Eaton associated with me and some younger officers. All day, from 9.30 A.M. to about 5, a continuous stream of people was permitted to pass into the house, entering the main door, then coming around into the East room through a south door, after passing which the stream divided and passed the corpse in a file on each side, and then, uniting again, left the room by the northern door, where it turned to the right and passed out of the building by an open window near the foot of the stairs.

"Perhaps 20,000 people thus passed through the building during the day, each one catching a glimpse of the embalmed face of the beloved President, and considerably more than that number were unable to gain admission and had to return to their homes disappointed. The head of the corpse was north, the feet south, the coffin being on a raised dais under a suitable canopy.

"The coffin was almost covered with flowers, and during the day I was compelled to keep an officer at the head and feet to prevent the people from gratifying a propensity to lay their hands on the forehead of the deceased, and to prevent them from taking souvenirs from among the wreaths of flowers. Repeatedly during the day I placed myself at the head, and once had to speak rather sharply to a woman whose motions were quick and whose hand had nearly reached Mr. Lincoln's forehead. One man implored me to let him have a flower. I told him 'No.' 'I would give anything in the world for one,' said he. 'It is impossible,' said I; 'it cannot be permitted.' I knew that if a beginning was

made it would take but a few minutes to strip off the whole.

"The procession has moved and a column of cavalry is passing under my window. I have not felt strong enough to join the procession and am in sadness alone in my quarters. Sitting up the greater part of night before last, and immediate attendance upon the corpse throughout yesterday, have quite exhausted me. Repeatedly yesterday I was almost entirely overcome by the incidents passing under my eye. Surely the people of this country loved Mr. Lincoln. Many of the visitors gave way, not to tears only, but to unrestrained sobs.

"Now I hear the solemn music as the procession moves from the President's mansion with all that remains of Mr. Lincoln.

"The day is clear—remarkably so. Minute guns are being fired.

"My opinion has been asked as to whether the rebel government has had anything to do with this assassination. I answer, 'No, certainly not directly, though it is one of the fruits of the rebellion.'

"April 21. This afternoon, as I was conversing with General Meigs on the sidewalk at Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th St., expressing the hope of hearing soon from Sherman, Meigs suddenly turned and said, 'Here's one of Sherman's officers, now,'—and there, sure enough, was my nephew, Major Henry Hitchcock, an assistant adjutant-general with Sherman. He had brought despatches from the General, which turned out to be Sherman's arrangements with Johnston for a peace. To-night Henry starts back with the refusal of the executive to sanction the arrangement. Henry had had no part in giving shape to the Sherman-Johnston terms, except to copy them.

"April 25. The newspapers are savagely abusing Sherman—one of the most brilliant soldiers the country has produced, and, as I happen to know by a thousand evidences, one of the purest men in the land. When the war began he was pronounced crazy, and now he is called crazy again! Nothing is so brittle as popular favor. I am reminded of Shakespeare's 25th sonnet:

The painful warrior famousèd for fight,  
After a thousand victories, once foiled,  
Is from the book of honor banished quite  
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled.

This successful and gifted general is now accused of having been a traitor in sentiment from the very beginning of the rebellion!

"April 29. General Johnston has surrendered to Sherman on Grant's terms to Lee. Mobile is captured. The rebels are not now known to have any force east of the Mississippi. I shall soon be free myself and am considering the best mode of withdrawing from the service without waiting a reduction of the army.

"May 14. Jefferson Davis is captured—in curious guise! Now he may find leisure to make his peace with God for his part in the great crime of the South."



## CHAPTER LXI

VIGOROUS DEFENCE OF STANTON. MEETS WITH A SERIOUS ACCIDENT. DETAILED TO ATTEND SCOTT'S FUNERAL. MUSTERED OUT OF SERVICE. SYMPATHETIC LETTER FROM STANTON. RESULT OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES. LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH. SHERMAN'S FRIENDLY REMONSTRANCE

THE great Civil War was at an end. The moral sense and political judgment of the North were vindicated, as far as war could vindicate them. The rebel armies had gone home and begun the renovation of the desolated plantations; the armies of the Union were slowly disbanded and mustered out of the service. There were days of great rejoicing and celebration in all the Northern cities. In the section of the country which had been in revolt the soldiers in gray pluckily took up the burden of life again, and the difficult work of political reconstruction began.

"Sept. 13. To-day I have sent to the publisher a revised copy of the *Red Book of Appin*, to which I have added the interpretations of *Palmerin*, for a new edition. It is my wish also to publish something in exposition of the *Arabian Nights Tales*, in which, generally, the Love of which so much is said is the mystic love of Nature figured as a Lady, usually a princess. In the gospel it is represented by the Magi following the star (Conscience).

"Washington, Oct. 9. Published another letter in the *Chronicle* this morning on the subject of exchanges. I am not eulogizing Mr. Stanton, but am stating some facts as an act of justice."

After the war the great Secretary was bitterly and fiercely attacked in the press and charged with refusing to exchange prisoners and thereby wantonly protracting the sufferings of our soldiers in Andersonville and Libby. General Hitchcock

vigorously defended him in a series of carefully prepared articles, aggregating twelve or fifteen newspaper columns. These explanations were so effective that they completely silenced the critics, and vindicated both the fervent patriotism and the humane character of the Secretary. They showed conclusively that nothing was left undone to effect a resumption of exchanges under the cartel, which the rebel government had wickedly repudiated. The following is an extract:

“In the meantime the sympathies of friends in the North naturally became awakened, and large quantities of supplies of all kinds were sent to Fortress Monroe, whence they were forwarded for the relief of the prisoners at Richmond; but the moment they passed beyond the control of our agents they fell into the hands of the most unprincipled and shameless scoundrels that ever disgraced humanity. It is in proof that large quantities of supplies, furnished by the benevolence of the North for the relief of suffering humanity in Southern prisons, were piled up in sight of the objects for whose relief those supplies were sent, but beyond the line of the prison guards; and while the prisoners were thus in sight of their own boxes they were not only forbidden to touch them, but compelled to witness depredations upon them by the guards themselves, who feasted upon their contents, leaving the victims of war a prey to that merciless barbarism which will make one of the darkest pages in the history of a rebellion which will itself remain an astonishment to all posterity for its almost causeless existence.

“Many have supposed that it was in the power of the government to afford relief to the prisoners in the South by a resort to a retaliatory treatment of rebel prisoners in the North. It is difficult to meet a suggestion of this kind by an appeal to the instincts of civilized humanity, because the mere suggestion supposes the absence of those instincts, and implies a willingness to see the public sentiment degraded into barbarism, which would have put the nation itself on the footing of savages, whose only excuse for their barbarity is their ignorance and their exclusion from the civilized world. The day must come when every true American will be proud of the reflection that the government was strong enough to crush the rebellion without losing the smallest element of its humanity or its dignity, and stands before the world unimpeached in its true honor and glory.

“It is proper that I should say that this statement is made upon my individual responsibility and without the knowledge of

the Secretary of War, who, it is well known, carefully abstains from appearing before the public in the newspapers, and is content to leave his deeds to proclaim their own history and make their own defence.<sup>1</sup>

“Nov. —. . . . Dante’s Lady was not a mortal woman, nor, probably, Petrarch’s Laura. I have no objection to the opinion that Dante saw a real person in Beatrice, the daughter of Fortunari, and was deeply impressed by her beauty. But I do object to the conclusion that the *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia* grew out of his relations to the woman. The real woman in the case I call, for convenience, Psyche, or Dante’s soul. *Don Quixote*, also, is a hermetic book. The doctrine of Pythagoras, whatever it was in detail, could not have been essentially unlike that of Christianity. The Eleusinian and Essenean societies were designed to teach by symbols. Dante’s *New Life* contains elements of the teaching; so do *Wilhelm Meister* and *Boethius*.”

The diarist continues his speculations as to the subjective character of many of the Middle-Age poems and romantic writings, dating his record, day by day, and sometimes hour by hour, as if it were part of a narrative of actual events, of which it was necessary to know the exact chronology. Occasionally he acknowledges that he is “not sure but it is all a dream,” and again declares that he is glad that he has spent so much time over it,—that no research could give more of pleasure or of profit. Every week he passes in review the hermetic pages whose hidden meanings he has studied for two score years, and every month he adds another famous classic author to his repertory. The old libraries of England, France, Spain, Greece, and Rome seem crowded full of mysticism and cryptology. Everywhere he finds the seers of innermost nature and the prophets of infinite wisdom concealed as mere commonplace story-tellers of human life. And

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Donn Piatt, a famous journalist and *raconteur* of that time, quoted this entire letter in one of his speeches, and added: “There, my friends, is the word of as true a man as the Lord ever stood on end. I know him personally. He is a clear-headed, brave-hearted old soldier, who would not flatter Neptune for his trident, and could no more be swerved from the truth than I could order these old oaks into column and march them about your dinner-table.”



of these inquiries and discoveries he writes enough to fill a library of books.

Now and then, during this winter of 1865-6, the diarist reverts from recondite symbols to obvious facts—from hermeneutics to politics. He is much worried by the breach ("fatal, probably") between President Johnson and Congress, and assumes that the President "must separate from his Cabinet all who oppose his policy." "I only see in all this a cause of great excitement and agitation in the country, with slender prospects of a return to the old peaceable state of things."

On March 11, 1866, General Hitchcock met with a serious accident, and from its effects he probably never entirely recovered. He was crossing G Street near the War Department when a runaway horse came dashing upon him. He leaped out of the way of it, but fell forward, striking the curb heavily. While unconscious he was picked up by strangers and carried home. His head and face were much bruised and disfigured. He was confined to his room for some time before he could go to the office at all, or even resume the studies which he was enthusiastically pursuing at this time.

When he had so far recovered as to be able to appear once more at his desk he was still very weak and unable to remain long occupied. For three months he was quite uncertain of his footsteps and his writing is uneven and wavering.

"Washington, May 24, 1866. On looking back I find that the accident under the effects of which I am laboring occurred months ago. I have been growing worse constantly and am now constrained to keep my quarters almost continually. . . . I seem to be living under two lives, but only one of them is at all clear. The other I have visions of, but I lose them the moment I seem to become conscious of them."

This dreamy state does not prevent his continuing his writing, and before the end of May he has sent off to the publisher his manuscript notes on Dante's *Vita Nuova*; and he says of it, "In preparing this copy I saw the meaning of the book even more clearly than ever before;—indeed I could almost realize the experience of the New Birth itself."

"Washington, May 3, '66. General Scott died yesterday at West Point at 11.05 A.M.<sup>1</sup>

"We have no particulars beyond a brief telegram from General Cullom to the Secretary of War saying that 'he expired without a struggle and conscious to the last.'

"My old chief is gone to what is called 'a better world.'

"I have a great many recollections of him, having seen him as far back as 1817. I was thenceforth more or less in the habit of seeing him every year till the close of my service in 1855. I was always at his elbow during his Mexican campaign and did all I could to aid him; and our friendly relations, which only then began, continued to the last.

"June 4. I called this morning to see Secretary Seward. I was very cordially greeted by the old hero, I must call him, with his face all slashed up by the knife of a traitor. After some general conversation he remarked: 'We have lost General Scott. He was the first man I ever heard speak of you at the beginning of the war. He presented a list of names for generals and among them was yours—the first on the list.'

"I had heard as much from others. I have reason to be thankful that I was not tempted to allow the Secretary to give me precedence over officers who have been effective in putting down the rebellion. I am content."

General Hitchcock spends this summer out of office hours chiefly in studies of the symbols of the alchemists and their application in the *Cabala*, in the sonnets of Shakespeare, in Dante, in Plato, Goethe, Spenser, Chaucer, Sidney, and the New Testament; the significance of the Smaragdine Table, the White Principle, the Astral Light, the New Birth, the Bible Miracles, etc. At this time his second edition of *Alchemy and the Alchemists* was on the press.

"Nov. 12, 1866. I wish to say that I saw, a moment since, what the Philosopher's Stone signifies.

"I do not omit a statement of it from any desire to make it a mystery. My relation to it is still to be determined. A great number of passages in books of alchemy seem perfectly

<sup>1</sup> General Hitchcock was detailed by the War Department to attend General Scott's funeral at West Point, June 1st, 1 o'clock.

clear now. I have nowhere told what it is or even what I think it is. It is a kind of revelation, but, when seen, has an effect something like looking at the sun. Personally I have much to fear from it, before I can look forward to its benefits. I have nothing to unsay in my books, and have but this to add: that they are studies to reach the One Thing."

The next diary (of 150 pages), continued through the spring of 1867, is filled wholly with speculations and conjectures from day to day,—an effort without intermission to decipher the esoteric mysteries of the best-known books of antiquity. Towards the end of May he enters this explanation: "I have said nothing about political events in my notes, because they will be duly chronicled, and I have felt a strong attraction in another direction"; which shows that he underrated the interest and importance attaching to the personal observation of an eyewitness of stirring scenes.

On October 1, 1867, General Hitchcock was mustered out of the volunteer forces of the United States. The diary contains a bare record of the fact, without comment.

During the winter his ailments returned upon him and in the next volume of his diary (120 pages) he tells of his prolonged illness:

"I have had the attendance of three physicians, and have survived it notwithstanding! Have had a pretty severe time of it and became familiar with the idea that I might give no one much further trouble. The idea was not painful in the least: on the contrary it helped me to my (for the present) final conclusions as to the sonnets of Shakespeare."

Now comes the record of a most important event in the life of the chronicler. During the preceding months his health had fluctuated and at this time, in an interval of improvement, he married Miss Martha Rind Nicholls, a member of a family with which he had maintained very intimate social relations for a whole generation.

On March 18, 1868, Secretary Stanton wrote to General Hitchcock:

"MY DEAR GENERAL: I regret to learn upon inquiry after your health to-day that you still remain much indisposed; for I had hoped that the opening of spring would restore your strength.



"If there is anything I can do to serve you, pray let me know, for I would take great pleasure in manifesting the esteem and regard with which I am

"Your friend,

"EDWIN M. STANTON."

In the intervals of sickness he assiduously seeks the relations between alchemy and masonry, and between both and the New Testament, where he finds esoteric mysteries. He comes to the conclusion that Swendenborg was "a High Mason," and that the society of the Essenes, of which Jesus was perhaps a member, was the ancient order of Masons. He writes, "I am sick and almost unable to hold my pen," but he does hold it very resolutely and goes on recording his soliloquy that the Old Testament and New Testament are largely symbolical. He sees some reason to think that Jesus, instead of being a historical personage, "was a poetic representation of the Truth." His friends come in during these months and read to him his favorite books, and sometimes they join him in studying with the Rosicrucians and searching for the clews of alchemy with Eirenius Philalethes. And he often declares that the "secret" is revealed to him more clearly than ever before. This number of the diary is mostly occupied with these studies and the last date in it is April 17, 1868—the first diary having been begun on Jan. 2, 1818, the year that he was twenty.

During all these years he had read much, and thought much, and during the last of them he had written much, sometimes borrowing, for the manual labor, the loving assistance of those who were nearest to him. There were now on sale at the bookstores the eight volumes, of three hundred to five hundred pages each, which he had written in the intervals of an active life—all prepared in the elucidation of a single thought and purpose and dealing with subjects entirely irrelevant to his professional duties. It is sufficient here to copy the title-pages, which are so elaborate as to convey a definite idea of the character of each:

REMARKS UPON ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS, indicating a method of discovering the true Nature of Hermetic Philosophy; and showing that the Search after the Phi-

losopher's Stone had not for its Object the Discovery of an Agent for the Transmutation of Metals; Being also an Attempt to Rescue from undeserved Opprobrium the Reputation of a Class of extraordinary Thinkers in Past Ages. "Man shall not live by Bread alone." Pp. 323. Published by Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston. 1857.

SWEDENBORG, A HERMETIC PHILOSOPHER; Being a Sequel to *Remarks on Alchemy and the Alchemists*. Showing that Swedenborg was a Hermetic Philosopher and that his Writings may be Interpreted from the Point of View of Hermetic Philosophy. With a chapter comparing Swedenborg and Spinoza. "One truth openeth the way to another." Pp. 358. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York. 1858.

CHRIST THE SPIRIT: Being an Attempt to State the Primitive View of Christianity. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the Flesh profiteth nothing. The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life." Two vols. Pp. 985. Published by C. F. Francis & Co., New York. 1851.

SPENSER'S POEM ENTITLED *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, EXPLAINED; With remarks upon the Amoretti Sonnets, and also upon a Few of the Minor Poems of other early English poets. By the author of *Remarks on the Sonnets of Shakespeare*, to which this volume is designed as a companion. Pp. 306. Published by James Miller, New York. 1865.

REMARKS ON THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE; with the Sonnets. Showing that they belong to the Hermetic Class of Writings, and explaining their general meaning and purpose. Pp. 392. Published by James Miller, New York. 1865.

THE RED BOOK OF APPIN; a Story of the Middle Ages. With other Hermetic Stories and Allegorical Tales. A new edition, enlarged by a chapter of the *Palmerin of England*, with interpretations and remarks upon the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. Pp. 298. Published by James Miller, New York. 1866.

NOTES ON THE VITA NUOVA AND MINOR POEMS OF DANTE, together with the *New Life*. Pp. 377. Published by James Miller, New York. 1866.

For these books he received letters of thanks and congratulation from friends and strangers, many of them distinguished persons.

His physical disabilities increased, and in the fall of 1868 he was ordered by his physicians to a warmer climate. Although he had spent much of his life above the latitude of 40° he had always dreaded the Northern winter, and was now taken to Charleston, South Carolina, whose mild air was grateful and seemed to agree with him. In January, 1870, he was removed to a pleasant country home in the pine region near Sparta, Hancock County, Georgia, on the southwestern edge of the broad zone which Sherman's army travelled to the sea. He rode much in the balsam-laden air and had all the comforts attainable by an invalid, and the most devoted and loving care, but the diseases contracted during his severe service in Mexico now made rapid and irresistible progress. He retained his serenity of mind and philosophical spirit to the last, and, after a long illness unaccompanied with pain, he died on August 5, 1870.

In accordance with his expressed wish and by direction of the Secretary of War he was interred at West Point, where some of the happiest and most fruitful years of his life had been passed.

A simple monument in the cemetery there marks his grave.

General Hitchcock kept his interest in esoteric studies keenly alive to the last. At different periods in his career some of his friends, appreciating his literary ability and his extraordinary opportunities, had urged him to abandon or at least to postpone the studies which attracted him most, and to write, instead, a chronicle of the important public events with which he came in touch. During the Mexican War Captain Bliss asked him to prepare a history of it, as "the best man to do it"; Larnard said, "You must not neglect this duty"; General Scott suggested that he should give the world the benefit of his diary; and more than one of his military comrades wrote to him that they had gladly heard



that he was writing a history of that war. Indeed, he did, as has been seen, begin such a history, but to him the considerations of the eternal were always more important than the things of time. He took more pleasure in the infinite than in the finite; in metaphysics than in physics; in the occult than in the obvious—more pleasure because they satisfied the loftiest aspirations of an unusually inquisitive mind.

His intimate and admiring friends frequently called him to account for his preference. Capt. William Tecumseh Sherman, in 1858, while building himself up for that marvellous march from Atlanta to the sea, and while they were both out of the army, wrote to him from New York a letter, the last half of which may be given here as an example of the amicable remonstrances:

“I notice in your letter that your mind still delights in metaphysics, and that you may again write a book. I think I can appreciate your feelings when engaged in the pursuit of a knowledge of abstract divine and moral Truth, but unfortunately, though every man is supposed to have an inner mind and conscience, far more precious and worthy of enlightenment than those generally attributed to the brain, yet not one in a million really acts upon this supposition. Thus where one would indulge in a delightful dream in contemplating the abstract beauties of the moral truths of Swedenborg, or the almost heavenly fancies of your old friend Goethe, a thousand would bound with throbbing hearts at contemplating the struggles of armies for victory, nations for conquest, or orators for mastery.

“I'm afraid I've got beyond my depth, but I know, my dear General, that you will take from me kindly anything meant as such, and as I have touched on this subject and as this is not steamer night, when I may without impropriety indulge in a gossip, I'll overstep this sheet and elaborate my crude idea.

“It seems to me, either whether in judging of the past ages from history, or of present time from simple observation, that beneath all there is a moving cause urging forward the moral and physical world, and whilst things revolve in circles yet those circles move along toward some great climax that I fear it is not ours to comprehend. The philosopher or moralist who simply seeks happiness might most readily attain it by directing the energies of his mind toward his inner self, and thus find satisfaction, repose, and contentment; but while so engaged, a rude

world outside goes clamorously on, and soon carries the philosopher spite of himself towards a gulf of ruin. Whilst gliding along the smooth channels of fancy and poetry, of truth and honor, sincerity and charity, his bark is crushed and utterly annihilated by contact with some rude piratical hulk. From this I infer that God rules that man, intellectual man, shall not alone confine his studies and thoughts to the more exquisite workings of his inner self, but shall go forth, manfully, study the world as it is, its tendencies, and aims, and whilst cultivating, as far as his condition will permit, the kindly charities of his mind and conscience, shall use that mind and conscience to bring about harmoniously the great end of nature, as he judges it to be. Or, in other words, that man who fills honorably a high worldly station, mingling with it, sharing in the deeds of his time, partaking of its councils, rearing a family, and preparing for a future, whilst within himself he cherishes a love of honor and virtue, of poetry, and excellence in all things, best answers the design of the Creator of man. Washington is the best model of such a man.

“Of course such a one must be very rare, but there are others partaking partially of his virtues, and not a year in the history of any nation but what some man or some event occurs which is but a link in the great chain of human destiny. Now, though we are apt to think lightly of events and people round about us, yet when you look back to the days of your boyhood and let your thoughts follow your own footsteps till the day you read this, you must admit that no portion of the world’s history has been more prolific of events that point towards the destiny of the human family; and I know you could write a book on a hundred different subjects that would be more useful, more instructive, give more exquisite pleasure, than the most elaborate and learned disquisition of the fancies and abstract moral elaborations of Swedenborg. It may be that the public sense is wrong, that it would contribute more to our true greatness and glory were we less material and more ethical; still all I mean to say is that my judgment of the fact is, that now, at this day, rightfully or wrongfully, the world, the American world, is but partially given to nice metaphysics. A thousand read your letters flooring General Pillow on a question of historical fact when one reads the work on Alchemy. Recurring to my theory, that, if it be a fact that the present taste is material and not ethical, it is so far a divine purpose; it is right; it is because it forms some part in a series of events having some divine end to subserve—though it



would be heroic to change this tendency, I believe it would be like poor Haydon struggling through poverty and insult to death, to establish high art in shopkeeping England.

"Now in conclusion, my dear General, of these crude, ill-timed, unsolicited remarks, I will say that I should delight to read just such a book as you could write, giving a history of the moral, military, and physical tendencies of our own country—not a critique, not a naked statement of facts, not a panegyric, but just such a judgment as you would arrive at from seeing the violent, mobocratic, corrupt events of every day, yet the accompanying facts of extension of frontier, great increase of physical wealth, indomitable perseverance and energy everywhere, with education also widely diffused. Are we as a people progressing or retrogressing? Are we as a military people equal to our forefathers, or are we less subordinate, less influenced by high patriotism? It seems to me in a philosophical investigation of these elements and tendencies you could make a book that would be worthy of you, and would be the fruit of your hard-earned fame as an officer and student. No doubt you will think I had better be adding up my figures—but I am idle, and idleness is the root of all evil, and sometimes the cause of meddling. Wishing you health and happiness, I am your true friend,

"W. T. SHERMAN."

Probably Captain Sherman did not know that the great bulk of his correspondent's writings had been exactly of the sort he recommended and asked for. He knew that General Hitchcock had written newspaper letters enough to fill an octavo volume, publicly and boldly criticising and correcting his contemporaries concerning the most important facts of a long military career; but he probably was not acquainted with the fact that he had always taken notes of the world's practical affairs with the avidity of a professional historian; that he had abstracted and filed thousands of valuable private letters with a method amounting to punctiliousness; and that in a written diary he had every week and almost every day of his life for half a century industriously recorded his experiences and observations, setting them down so painstakingly, and expressing them so lucidly, that they could at any time thereafter be easily unbraided and compiled in a work which would serve as a monument to his memory as containing not only a history of the Mexican War but an



elaborate treatise on that "hundred different subjects" which his faithful Mentor suggested but did not specify. That voluminous literary bequest, assorted, sifted, co-ordinated, and arranged, is transmitted to the public in this work.

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